



Interline Considerations on Baggage Standards



Guidance Document for Airlines



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1. Introduction and context

The global COVID-19 pandemic has led to many airlines suspending at least part of their scheduled passenger operations. New interline relationships will be a vital enabler for industry recovery, providing traffic for airlines and connectivity for passengers. Airlines may need to pursue new and more varied relationships to support their networks as they recover, and to allow them to serve more origin – destination markets as their operations restart and their networks are restored.

A need has been identified to provide carriers with a Guidance Document on baggage standards covering the end to end interline processes. This is part of the package of work built by airlines in the Interline Group around the reinvigorating of the multilateral framework and supporting airlines to ease the formation of new partnerships.

This document provides an overview of the main processes and recommendations to support the handling and carriage of baggage when the routing involves other carriers. The information contained in this document is based on the IATA Resolutions and Recommended Practices adopted at the annual IATA Passenger Standards Conference (PSC) and published in the *Passenger Standards Conference Manual*, effective from 1 June 2020.

If bilaterally agreed, airlines may apply different rules and exceptions to standard procedures.

Each airline shall ensure that all the internal teams know and abide by all applicable anti-trust regulations and limitations.

2. Baggage definition

Each airline is responsible to set its own rules permitting customers to transport baggage. These rules can vary according to passenger's Frequent Flyer status, the product and services purchased and/or the selected route(s). IATA plays no role in this activity and IATA's primary focus is to develop [Standards](#) and best practices around baggage management, including the tracking and tracing of mishandled bags.

These rules and policies are usually defined for the following main types of baggage:

- Carry-on or cabin baggage - defined as the baggage that is carried and stowed in the aircraft cabin under the passengers' control and custody.
- Checked-in baggage - defined as the baggage for which the carrier takes custody, issues, validates or updates a baggage tag.

It is important that passengers are clearly informed on the baggage carry-on rules they should comply with, together with their entitlement for checked-in baggage (if applicable) and charges for excess items or overweight/oversized items.

Baggage rules are complex, and there are many different models that carriers use to determine a passenger's baggage entitlement, or the pricing structure for baggage that is not included in the passenger fare. That's why it is extremely important that carriers' agents provide passengers with the most comprehensive carrier information related to baggage policies, that will apply to the entire ticketed itinerary.

3. Baggage management considerations in interline

In order to process baggage, carriers should establish policies and procedures to facilitate the handling of baggage in interline itineraries and reduce potential seams in their shared passenger's journey. Where the interline scenarios imply involvement of a 3rd party carrier or ground handler, these should be addressed and anticipated as well by the interline partners.

Each airline shall ensure that all the internal teams know and abide by all applicable anti-trust regulations and limitations.

When implementing a new interline partnership it is recommended that carriers discuss and clarify the following aspects with their partners:

- Baggage policies and allowance
- Baggage provision determination
- Reservations and ticketing procedures
- Excess baggage definition and limitations
- Operational handling
- Mishandled baggage
- Reporting and Settlement of bag fees that are collected

These aspects will be further detailed in the following sections of this document.

4. Baggage policies and allowance

Carriers should address whether baggage policies and procedures will vary depending on the type of connections (domestic or international), by airport or type of Ground Handler.

Passengers' baggage allowance is generally based on a combination of rules for checked-in baggage and for carry-on baggage. The baggage allowance can be included in the passenger's fare, as an ancillary product, or as part of a program or membership. As each airline is responsible to determine its own baggage allowance and there are many different models for baggage entitlements it is important that interline partners are aware of, and plan for procedures when there are different policies on a single passenger itinerary.

There are two standard checked-in free baggage allowance concepts:

- **Weight Concept:** measured by the total weight of checked-in baggage, which is shown as a weight amount on the ticket (e.g. 20 kg or 45 lb).
- **Piece Concept (PC):** measured by the number of pieces of checked-in baggage (shown as PC on the ticket).

Some carrier policies combine these concepts part of their baggage allowance policy, such as 2 pieces not weighing more than 32KG in total or one piece allowed per passenger.

In case of free/discounted allowance (included in the fare to be paid), IATA Recommended Practice 1788 – *Ticketing and baggage regulations for free and reduced transportation*, outlines the considerations carriers need to take into account for both reservation and ticketing procedures.

Member airlines of the ZED-MIBA Forum programs have established baseline provisions for baggage allowance.

In case of included and chargeable baggage allowances, it is recommended that carriers disclose their individual allowance via ATPCO. Many airline systems incorporate details from ATPCo's database, especially when determining the applicable charges for excess items or oversize/overweight items. The database has also critical information about items that may be embargoed (notably oversized special items on smaller aircraft types).

5. Baggage provisions

In interline itineraries, carriers shall ensure and be clear which carrier's baggage provisions apply in any circumstances. Whatever baggage provisions apply, this must be clear to the customer, and clear to the Operating Carrier and/or Ground Handler systems and the teams in the airport environment.

In the current environment, a single set of baggage provisions applies to an entire itinerary. The provisions that will apply are either selected following regulations, following the industry default selection provisions (IATA Resolution 302), or are selected by bilateral agreement.

The main standard processes that currently determine the application of baggage provisions for interline journeys are:

- IATA Resolution 302 determining which rules to apply in an interline journey, for each checked portion and defining the concept of the Most Significant Carrier (MSC).
- US Rule for travel originating in or with the destination to either USA (U.S. DOT Regulation 399.87) or Canada (CTA Order 2014-A-158). The Governments of these nations require that a different concept applies. This concept states that the provisions of the Marketing Airline on the first coupon of the overall ticket shall apply to all flights on that ticket.

Determining the Most Significant Carrier (MSC)

The process to determine the Most Significant Carrier (MSC) is defined in IATA Resolution 302.

In case of code-share flights, in general the Marketing Carrier's baggage policy prevails, unless that carrier publishes a rule stipulating that the Operating Carrier's baggage policy should apply.

The general rules to determine the MSC are based on the Areas where the transportation takes place. These areas are categorized between the IATA Traffic Conference (TC) Areas and Sub-Areas as follows:

- Traffic Conference Area 1 (TC1): The Western Hemisphere (The Americas and The Caribbean)
- Traffic Conference Area 2 (TC2): Europe, Middle East and Africa
- Traffic Conference Area 3 (TC3): Asia and Asia Pacific

Based on the above categorization the MSC is:

- The carrier performing carriage on the first sector that crosses from one Area to another for travel between two or more Tariff Conference (TC) Areas
 - Exception: TC123 only, the carrier providing carriage on the first sector that crosses between TC1 and TC2.
- The carrier performing carriage on the first sector that crosses from one Sub-Area to another for travel between two or more Tariff Conference (TC) Sub-Areas
- The carrier performing carriage on the first international sector for travel within a Tariff Conference (TC) Sub-Area.

More information on this resolution can be found in the IATA Passenger Tariff Coordinating Conferences Resolutions Manual.

Determination of Baggage Provisions

To determine which rules to apply in an interline journey, for each checked in portion, the following standard process should be applied per IATA Resolution 302:

- Step 1: In case the published baggage rules are the same amongst all carriers in an itinerary, then the same baggage rules should apply.
- Step 2: In case one or more published baggage rules differ between carriers in an itinerary, then the published baggage provision of the MSC should apply.
 - In case of code-share flights the Marketing Carrier rule is applied unless the Marketing Carrier's published rules stipulate the use of the Operating Carrier rules.
- Step 3: In case the MSC does not publish baggage rules for the journey, then the rules of the check-in carrier should apply.
- Step 4: In case the check-in carrier does not publish baggage rules for the interline journey, then the rules of each Operating Carrier should apply, sector-by-sector.

Additionally, when transporting baggage across carriers if additional charges need to be collected (e.g. chargeable baggage, excess baggage, etc.) the currency aspects shall also be considered and carriers should follow the recommendations described in the IATA Resolution 024a – *Establishing passenger fares and related charges* and IATA Resolution 024d – *Currency names, codes, rounding units and acceptability of currencies*.

6. Reservation and ticketing procedures

When a Passenger Name Record (PNR) is created or modified it is important to determine the baggage provisions that will apply for the selected itinerary.

Many systems have the capability to determine the applicable baggage allowance when the PNR is created or modified in accordance to the existing standards and processes, either by including these entitlements in the reservation, or by referencing the tariffs that apply to the reservation. However, where there are no specific airline requirements and the systems do not provide the allowance, it is the responsibility of the agent making the reservation to determine the baggage allowance and advise the customer(s) accordingly. This is subject to auditing and revenue controls and airlines can raise an Agency Debit Memo (ADM) in case the agent does not follow the airline instruction.

In general, the applicable free baggage allowance is included in the fare to be paid and would apply to any passenger who purchased this fare. Any additional entitlements granted to a passenger by virtue of their Frequent Flyer status, membership, corporate agreement, etc. would not apply, unless agreed bi-laterally between carriers.

The information about the passenger's baggage allowance and the carrier whose provisions have been selected may have been further stored in the passenger's e-ticket record, and may be exchanged in the standard ticketing messages to ensure visibility on the passenger's ticket record at any touch point. It is important that carriers ensure that there is enough information to determine baggage entitlements, which may also be achieved by filing fares with a service such as ATPCO.

The baggage allowance of the ticket requires only the most basic information to be present, such as 20K, 30K, or 2PC. When the fare does not permit any free baggage allowance, 'NO', 'NIL' or 'XX' shall be entered in the baggage allowance. More details on how to store baggage information such as allowance and chargeable amounts in the e-ticket, can be found in the IATA Resolution 722, Chapter 18 - Baggage.

The information in the e-ticket is further made available to the Departure Control System (DCS) and allows airport agents to process the interline passenger at check-in when accepting baggage. With this information, a DCS will determine if additional fees should be collected for checked-in bags in excess of the entitled allowance.

In the current environment it is recommended that carriers' part of the interline itinerary exchange baggage data in electronic ticketing standard messages. These standard messages allow carriers to include and exchange various baggage related information such as the information on the maximum free baggage allowance weight via the "Maximum Free baggage Weight" data element (e.g. when the baggage allowance is based on pieces carriers can include as well the baggage weight followed by kilos 'K' or pounds 'L', e.g. 23K or 50L) or dimension via "Maximum Free Baggage Dimensions" data element (e.g. when the baggage allowance is based on pieces can include as well the maximum linear dimensions of the baggage followed by centimeters 'C' or inches 'I').

In case the customer requests to transport other types of baggage services in addition to the default baggage allowance (such as bulky baggage, fragile baggage, courier baggage or bicycles) a notification should be sent to the other carriers participating in the interline itinerary.

In general, a Special Service Request (SSR), with a dedicated service code, will be created in the PNR to capture this service. In interline itineraries the booking source should use the applicable booking method of each carrier and the service should be requested in separate transaction to each of the carrier part of the itinerary. Consequently, the carrying airline should reply to the booking agent with either a confirmation or rejection of the request and it is recommended that an agent should not assume that a message has been received or actioned without this confirmation.

More details about the procedures carriers should follow from a reservation perspective for excess baggage, bulky baggage, fragile baggage, cabin baggage, courier baggage and bicycles, can be found in the the Recommended Practice 1790c, A4A/IATA Reservation Interline Message Procedures (AIRIMP) Chapter 3.21.3 and Reservations Handbook (RHB) Chapter 15.4 – *Exceptional baggage*.

At the time the customer's booking is confirmed, it is also critical that baggage related information is clearly disclosed, as it will be applied during the journey. This should include the baggage allowance that is included at no additional cost, baggage allowance that has been purchased separately, the ability to purchase additional checked-baggage either before travel or at time of check-in, any charges that will apply for excess baggage, and any limitations on cabin baggage.

There are certain cases where a more detailed explanation of the baggage allowances and policies must be provided to the customer and the most common procedure is to include this information in plain text on the passenger itinerary receipt. If such information is not present on the receipt, carriers shall address and agree on best practices to ensure passing on the fullest information to the customer, based on the information usually present in the pricing and ticketing system.

7. Excess baggage

The purchase of additional baggage and the collection of excess baggage may create different challenges especially in interline scenario.

Industry standards such as Electronic Miscellaneous Documents (EMDs) provide a mechanism to facilitate these processes using accountable documents and an interline settlement process, however these processes need to be agreed and implemented between carriers

Carriers may also bilaterally establish a mechanism by which it can be recorded that an additional bag has been purchased. This should allow that this baggage is recognized in the airport environment and establish a process for billing value associated with the purchase of additional baggage if they choose to.

From a reservation perspective, in the traditional distribution environment, the reservation agent should create an SSR Excess Baggage (XBAG) in the PNR to notify the other airlines participating in the itinerary when a customer wishes to take a considerable amount of excess baggage on a flight.

Example: SSR XBAG CC NN/AMSGVA 0345M15NOV.5PIECES EACH30×25×15CM TOTL85KG

When baggage related charges need to be collected on an accountable document, such as an EMD - A, the standard recommended Reason For Issuance Code (RFIC) to be used by carriers is 'C' - Baggage. This EMD-A will then be lifted with the associated ticket coupon.

More detailed scenarios on chargeable baggage related services can be found in the Reservation Handbook, Chapter 26 and the specific reservation message formats to be used are described in the A4A/IATA Reservation Interline Message Procedures (AIRIMP) in Chapter 3.21.3 *Baggage related services*.



Different examples of the process and the image of EMDs when collecting baggage charges are available in the Ticketing Handbook (THB) Chapter 3.8.2 - *Baggage*.

An Interline EMD Baggage Implementation Guide have been published by IATA and this document outlines the recommended end-to-end usage of the Associated Electronic Miscellaneous Document (EMD-A) standards specific to the use of EMDs in relation to baggage. The specifications and examples included in this Guide are intended to facilitate the proper issuance, collection, refund, and processing of EMD-A for baggage, but are not exhaustive.

Carriers should bilaterally agree on the set of data and messages to be exchanged in case of excess baggage. The IATA template for the Interline Electronic Miscellaneous Documents and Additional/Optional Services General Business Requirements (EMD GBR) can be used by the interline partners to check and agree on the technical settings of each party.

[Paper Excess Baggage Tickets](#)

IATA Member airlines have (since 2015) endorsed removal of paper traffic documents, with only one exception: for excess baggage until 31 May 2021.

This exception, and the allowance to use Excess Baggage Tickets, is for carriers who wish to interline excess baggage charges and who do not have interline EMD capability. In this case carriers should bilaterally discuss and agree with each of their partners to any exceptions on the listed standards recommendations, and they should ensure that any administrative procedures are understood by each airline.

8. Operational Handling

The generic operational flow of the checked-in baggage, from the acceptance of the baggage through to the return of the baggage to the passenger is illustrated in the following diagram:

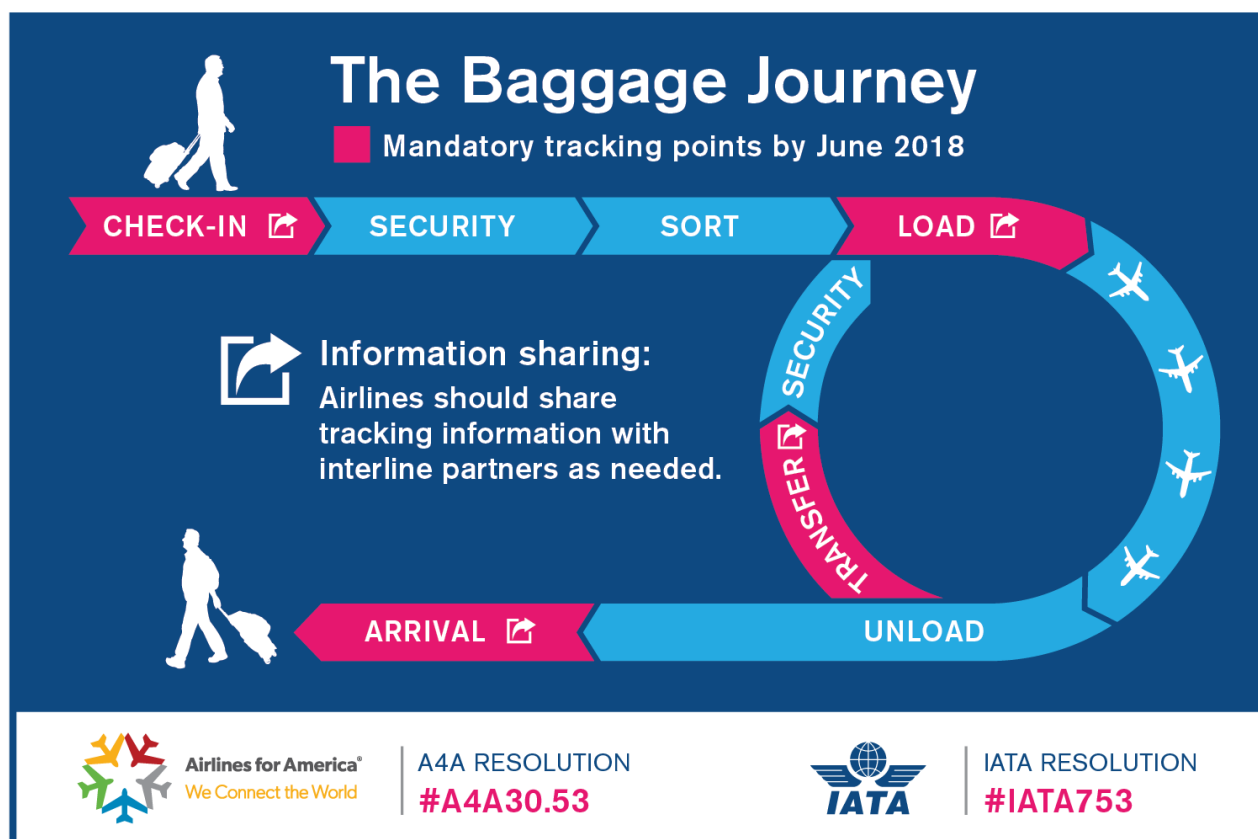


Figure 1: Operational baggage flow

The operational procedures that carriers should follow when forming an interline partnership are outlined in the Resolution 780 *Form of Interline Traffic Agreement – Passenger including Baggage*.

8.1 Checked-in baggage

Checked-in baggage is a baggage for which the carrier takes custody and issues, validates or updates a baggage tag. Checked-in baggage is transported in the hold of the aircraft on which the passenger is travelling but remains inaccessible for the passenger during the flight.

Resolution 780 stipulates the procedures which shall be used for the Interline carriage of passenger's baggage, where the passenger's journey on one ticket (including conjunction tickets) involves connecting transportation on two or more flights.

From an operational standpoint, a connection between two scheduled flights is defined when the delivering carrier's flight is scheduled to arrive at the connecting point and the receiving carrier's flight is scheduled to depart from the connecting point on the same day or on the next day within 12 hours. It also implies that the delivering carrier has clarified with the passenger to have the baggage checked through.

The operator may refuse to carry checked-in baggage if this baggage:

- is likely to endanger the aircraft or persons or property on board the aircraft
- is inadequately packed or unsuitable for air carriage due to its weight, size or nature or forbidden by law, regulations, security standards or safety standards of any state to be flown from, to or over¹.

The baggage of a passenger registered for an international departure flight but who has failed to board that flight, cannot be placed or kept on board the aircraft (Baggage Reconciliation). Such a baggage should be subject to security control as detailed in the *Positive Passenger Baggage Matching* covered in IATA Recommended Practice (RP) 1739.

8.2 Baggage Acceptance

Prior to the transportation of interline baggage it is recommended that the originating carrier:

- Ensure the baggage is adequately secured to permit safe transportation with ordinary care. If the baggage has no family name and initials, the passenger shall affix such exterior identification to the baggage prior to acceptance;
- Issue for each piece of baggage an interline baggage tag that complies with industry standards IATA Resolution 740 and RP1740a;
- Draw passenger's attention to the baggage identification tag(s) and in particular to the destination where they need to collect their bag upon returning the baggage identification tag(s) to the passenger.

The ten-digit license plate on the tag uses the Baggage Tag Issuer Code (BTIC) of the originating carrier who accepted the baggage and issued the bag tag.

For codeshare flights, in order to ensure the interline bag is transferred correctly, the tag itself must bear the flight designator (airline designator and flight number) of the operating flight. The BTIC, according to IATA Resolution 769 must be registered and usable in other systems (such as airports, other airlines, etc.)

¹ Reference: Special Handling Processes: i.e. live animals, dangerous goods, firearms etc. as covered in Resolutions 745, 745a, 745b and IATA Live Animals Regulations

In the event that passengers must collect their checked-in baggage at any point before their final destination (such as a transfer point), they must be clearly informed of this, and what actions are required to re-check the baggage with the next carrier in the journey service, especially if it will require leaving the sterile "airside" environment and requiring security screening.

Subject to Operating Airline policy, of each airline involved in the carriage of the baggage, the baggage can be checked-in and labelled to one of the following points, whichever occurs first:

- The next stopover point for the passenger
- The point to which transportation has been confirmed (where coupon status is OK), requested (where coupon status is RQ) or listed (where coupon status is SA).
- The point where a change of airport is involved
- The final destination specified in the ticket, including any tickets issued in conjunction with the original ticket.

In addition, carriers shall address and consider the following needs:

- The Minimum Connecting Time (MCT) shall be respected, and adjustments to airport default MCTs should ensure that bags can be reliably transferred between arriving and departing flights
- Unless subject to specific agreement between airlines, through check-in baggage on separate tickets is prohibited.

Following the IATA Resolution 754 (Profile 10 - Through Check-in—No Interline Agreement between Carriers), when the originating carrier accepts baggage for through check-in and no interline agreement exists between the carriers, it will be considered as a fault in the baggage prorate process, and will result in 100% prorate of the mishandling expense to the carrier who checked in the bag.

Through check-in on separate tickets and without any additional agreement in place increases the risk of baggage being mishandled at the transfer point, leading thus to a risk and negative customer experience when handling passenger's baggage. If allowed by the Operating Airline policies, the baggage may be labelled to a transfer destination on the ticket.

Specific rules of the Operating Airline apply for special types of baggage, such as Live Animals (AVIH), and there may be additional rules or restrictions imposed by local regulation or the aircraft types in use.

Examples:

Case	Through labelling	Remarks/Actions for airline or ground handling staff
Customs clearance required at the transfer point	Yes	Advise passenger to pick up baggage at the transfer point. Refer to TIM/TIMATIC for country rules.
The passenger specifically wants the baggage at a transfer point	No	Inform the passenger about the risk of missing the connecting flight.
Animals Vivant In Hold (AVIH)	Yes	Only permitted if the continuing carrier has confirmed acceptance. Within permissible MCT.

When passengers must collect their hold baggage during the transfer process (for example because of immigration or security policies of a State), the airline or its contracted Ground Handler should treat hold baggage as originating baggage. If the baggage is collected at landside, it might need to be submitted to screening before loading it on the aircraft. Interline transfer and connecting baggage must follow the reconciliation procedures as originating baggage as per Operating Carrier policy and national regulations.

8.3 Baggage Carriage

It is recommended that interline and online connecting baggage shall be separated from other baggage, mail and cargo on all aircraft arriving non-stop or with one-stop already from the Point of Origin. MITA-P Article 3.5.2 requires that when it becomes necessary to leave the baggage behind due to payload/weight restrictions, each party of the agreement shall give loading priority to transferring interline baggage. A best practice for baggage destined for a short connection is to identify it with a remark on the baggage tag, a separate short connection tag or sticker, or as an attribute in an electronic bag identification and tagging system.

At each airport, IATA procedures in Resolution 744 guide the establishment and practices of a Local Baggage Committee. This includes senior representatives of the scheduled passenger airlines operating regularly in that location, that work to ensure the timely and accurate transfer of interline bags. One important responsibility of the Local Baggage Committee is to establish the default minimum connecting time requirements at the concerned airport. IATA Resolutions 744 and 765, along with IATA RP 1744, describe this process as well as the procedures for exceptions that may be needed.

It is the responsibility of the delivering airline to transfer and deliver the baggage to the next receiving airline at the location and hours based on the agreement between the concerned parties (e.g. *Agreed*

Transfer Point as per the *Service Level Agreement* or the *Standard Ground Handling Agreement*). It should not be assumed that an airline will be able to receive interline baggage without prior arrangement or notification.

Even with standards agreed and supported at key airports where interline transfers take place it is crucial that the Local Baggage teams agree on how bags will be moved, how often, how fast and who will handle each step according to the local procedures as agreed.

In the event of customs clearance or government imposed security measures at an intermediate point *en route* of a transfer journey, when the passenger is requested to be physically present with the bag, the delivering airline shall be responsible for informing the passenger, preferably immediately after disembarkment.

In case the agent involved with the re-check-in process notices a mistake or a problem (e.g. the departure is delayed or cancelled, the bag tag reflects an incorrect flight number), they should address that before sending the bag through.

When passengers have been involuntarily rerouted (typically after a delay or cancellation), Interline partners should minimize the impact of the inconvenience by efficiently rerouting the passenger's checked baggage.

8.4 Wheelchairs and mobility aids

Wheelchairs and Mobility Aids are crucial to their passenger owners, and thus must be treated with special care. Mobility devices such as wheelchairs, rolling walkers or swiss tracks operated with manual or electric power must be handled accordingly. There are specific rules and concerns when handling such aids, especially when they have batteries that also need special handling. Battery-powered wheelchairs (usually captured in the PNR using the following SSR codes: SSR WCBD, SSR WCBW) cannot be interlined according to the IATA Resolution 745b.

8.5 Cabin baggage

Cabin baggage is carried and stowed in the cabin under passengers' control and custody. It is also commonly referred to as hand baggage, carry-on baggage or unchecked cabin baggage.

Each carrier sets its standards for the size, weight and number of pieces permitted as cabin baggage. In the event that carry-on baggage entitlements vary between carriers, i.e. is prohibited, or is payable, it should be understood between carriers and address the impact to an interline passenger during the journey.

Cabin baggage includes:

- Cabin baggage carried within the Operating Carrier free carry-on baggage allowance
- Free carry-on items permitted by the Operating Carrier in addition to the standard allowance (e.g. purse, laptop, duty free item, winter coats, etc.)
- Special items permitted by the Operating Carrier that may require prior arrangement, notification and/or specialized screening or additional charges (e.g., urns containing human remains, pets, medical equipment and valuables, etc.)

The maximum size and weight for carry-on baggage items are established by the operating airline. These dimensions include wheels, handles, side pockets, etc. Any item exceeding these dimensions may not be accepted as carry-on baggage.

Following the IATA Recommended Practice 1749, carriers shall publish a maximum carry-on baggage allowance applicable to their aircraft fleet. Such allowances may vary from carrier to carrier and by classes of service. Therefore, when interline carriage is involved, the passenger should be informed of the allowances of all the carriers in their itinerary to determine if their baggage is acceptable (e.g. between long haul and short haul flights).

Cabin baggage can only be accepted if:

- It is suitable and compliant with the air transportation policies for weight, size and nature
- Can fit under the seat or be stowed in the overhead compartment
- Is suitably packed
- Conforms with airport security and safety policies.

Restrictions shall apply:

- In case of certain items because of their weight, size or nature can only be accepted with the consent of the Operator (e.g. musical instruments, etc.)
- For security reasons, as many countries restrict the carriage of liquids, aerosols and gels in hand baggage
- To items refused by security screening which must be hold-checked as per the Operating Airline policies
- In addition to airline policies, for Dangerous Goods items. The items permitted/excluded from cabin baggage must be checked against *the IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations* (DGR) Manual.

8.6 Baggage Messaging in the operational environment

After each flight departure, details of interline baggage transfers are sent using Baggage Transfer Messages (BTMs) as outlined in the IATA Resolution 709.

When carriers form new interline partnerships an important aspect to be considered is the impact and the cases where in specific airports the used Departure Control System (DCS) is different than the carrier's one (e.g. Ground Handler DCS). Those stations will have to comply with the expectations of the carrier downline interline partner.

The BTMs process often requires that each new interline relationship is also supported in the DCS used by each carrier or the carrier's Ground Handler. Any exceptions of this should be discussed and agreed between carriers.

The recommended procedures that airlines should follow and implement around the exchange of BTMs are described in the IATA Recommended Practice 1745.

The bar code on the baggage tag references the ten-digits bag tag number (not the flight details on the tag). That tag number is then linked with the tag's details in Baggage Information Messages (BIMs). According to IATA RP 1745, a variety of other BIMs are used to communicate between and among airline and airport systems to ensure prompt and accurate handling of airline's flights.

Following the IATA Resolution 753 it is mandatory to scan the interline baggage at four key points:

- at check-in, when loaded on the originating flight
- at the agreed transfer point (when the custody of the baggage changes)
- at handover to the downline connecting flight, airline or its handler
- upon arrival (typically at arrivals inject).

IATA Resolution 755 covers the rules and messaging for re-fighting into interline carriers.

Additional local regulations may apply, such as Bag Scanning in the United States.

9. Reporting and Settlement

Interline Baggage Proration

When forming a new interline partnership, carriers should ensure clear understanding on the impact of documents used to collect additional baggage fees how those are will be billed and settled.

If EMDs or excess baggage tickets have been agreed to be used, then carriers should ensure that the proration method is agreed and understood by each airline.

If the carriers bilaterally agree not to prorate baggage charges, or not to bill, they should ensure that the appropriate administrative procedures for back-office settlement are in place and understood by each carrier.

According to the Multilateral Proration Agreement Prorate (MPA-P) provisions if baggage fees or optional services fees are collected and an interlineable document (EMD) is issued, then such fees will

be prorated using Straight Rate Proration (SRP) methodology. SRP is the proportional division of the through fare or excess baggage charge across the entire interline journey.

Where the baggage fees are included in the sector fee(s) or fare components, no specific proration on these will be performed.

Interline Billing and Settlement

In the existing distribution environment, and specifically for carriers operating under MITA concurrences, carriers who operate services bill the issuing carrier after services have been delivered. As general rules, billing occurs under the standards established in the Revenue Accounting Manual (RAM), invoicing occurs through the Simplified Industry Settlement (SIS) platform, and settlement occurs through the IATA Clearing House (ICH). The Revenue Accounting Manual also contains information on how to manage the dispute processes.

When forming a new interline partnership, carriers should establish if any interline billing procedures beyond those established in IATA standards are needed.

The interline settlement rules for excess baggage are outlined in the Revenue Accounting Manual (RAM) Chapter A2 as following

RAM Chapter A2 Paragraph 1.1.4: *The airline issuing the ticket is responsible for the correct completion of the free baggage allowance box. The actual carrier is entitled to assume that the free baggage allowance inserted on each coupon, even when varying excess baggage allowances are applicable, is correct and may compute its charges to the passenger accordingly. If an under-collection is discovered later because of an incorrect free baggage allowance entry the actual carrier may debit the issuing airline for its loss of revenue*

RAM Chapter A2 Paragraph 1.7, Billing Excess Baggage Charges: *In respect of excess baggage charges billed on documents issued under the application of IATA Resolution 302, the issuing airline is responsible to the carrying airline for the full appropriate rate determined by the baggage provisions selection criteria of the resolution. If such a rate is not available, settlement shall be based on the filed carrier rule for the journey for which the flight coupon(s) was/were issued. If, for whatever reason, the issuing airline has made an under or over collection, it must absorb any resulting difference between the collected and applicable amounts.*

In case of incomplete routing, billing must be in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Revenue Accounting Manual Chapter A2. According to this, where a flight coupon shows incomplete or contradictory information for the calculation of the amounts to be billed the billing airline is entitled to bill an amount not exceeding the applicable excess baggage charge for the sector(s) billed.

In order to avoid interline disputes it is recommended that carriers address and discuss from the beginning their functional and technical capabilities in applying the IATA Resolution 302 to identify whose baggage rules apply.

For the interline invoicing that occurs through the Simplified Industry Settlement (SIS), RAM Passenger Source code 23 (EMD Billings) should apply for EMD issued for excess baggage while the RAM Passenger Source Code 25 (Excess Baggage Coupon Billings) refers to paper excess baggage documents.

According to RAM Chapter A2 Paragraph 1.2.2.1: *The issuing airline may reject any item billed under this sub-paragraph with the difference between the correct fare or excess baggage charge (or prorate thereof) and the amount billed only if the difference is more than USD30 gross or its equivalent. The minimum requirement of USD30 does not apply, if the issuing airline is able to prove that when issued, the ticket concerned was complete and not contradictory. The issuing airline must support its rejection with full details, i.e. a computer-generated image to show routing, carrying airlines and fare calculation points, of the basis on which the fare or excess baggage charge (and prorate) has been established.*

10. Mishandled baggage

Operational considerations

Regardless of the reason of baggage mishandling, it is important that interline carriers continue to focus and deliver an excellent customer service by providing prompt, efficient and caring efforts to reunite the passenger with his/ her missing baggage.

The carrier on which the passenger travelled to the point of stopover or final destination where the baggage is missing, is responsible for raising a file, tracing and tracking the missing baggage in order to deliver it back to the passenger. Nevertheless, at the request of the passenger, any carrier involved in the interline passenger journey should start the tracing process and then notify the carrier to whom the loss will be or was originally reported.

When a passenger reports the missing baggage at the connecting point where he/she is required to submit through checked-in baggage for customs clearance or government-imposed security check, the delivering carrier shall be responsible for:

- Immediately initiating tracing for the missing baggage in accordance with the agreed procedures, provided that there is sufficient time to obtain and record the baggage and flight data required for tracing; and
- Informing the carrier with whom the passenger travels to the final destination (and which remains responsible for accepting and resolving the customer's report) of:
 - the baggage missing already at the connecting point
 - the tracing initiated and its results

- the arrangements for forwarding the missing baggage to that airline for further delivery to the passenger.

When it's necessary to search for missing baggage, the IATA Resolution 743 and IATA RP1743a provide a useful framework for these processes.

Currently, most airlines either use SITA's WorldTracer® or a compatible system that is authorized to interface with WorldTracer.

When the destination to which the baggage is to be delivered is on the routing shown on the ticket, each carrier should transport the baggage without charge in accordance with such routing.

When the destination to which the baggage needs to be delivered is not on the routing shown on the ticket, the baggage shall be forwarded to the nearest airport point at the expense of the airline responsible for the mishandling.

Mishandled baggage (also known as RUSH baggage) shall be forwarded without charge by the fastest possible means using the services of any airline member, to the airport nearest to the passenger's address. Forwarding of such expedite baggage should not be restricted nor delayed at an interline connecting point for security reasons provided it has been screened. Some governments may require members to impose additional security controls.

An automated and printed on demand form of label (IATA Resolution 740) is used by many carriers, and a unique coding assigned to the RUSH tag permits it to be identified by scanning systems.

Carriers do not always accept each other's RUSH baggage. Where carriers do not accept RUSH baggage then different rules may be followed such as expediting mishandling bags via flights of alliance partners. RUSH bags might not be accepted for carriage because of weight and other operational restrictions (e.g. the size of aircraft).

An airline that participates in the carriage of baggage at the request of another airline (meaning carrying already mishandled baggage), should not be held liable for any loss, damage or delay that might occur, provided the participating airline was not involved in the original mishandling.

At the destination airport the expedite baggage shall be delivered to the passenger:

- by the airline on whose flight the passenger had travelled to the final destination or point of stopover; or
- in case the airline is not represented at the final destination or point of stopover, by any IATA Member, preferably by the Member on whose flight the expedite baggage arrived at such airport.

Claiming and settlement of mishandled baggage

Legal times for reporting cases of mishandling (delay, damage, pilferage, lost) are covered in the Montreal Convention, as well as the maximum limits for claim for lost or damaged baggage.

An airline receiving a baggage claim, and having participated in the carriage of the passenger, will process the claim to a conclusion, with the passenger, in accordance with the law of the country of settlement and airline's internal policies.

The tariff/policy of the claim-settling carrier will be applied to all baggage claim settlements. This covers interim expense policy, exclusions and liabilities.

Such settlement will then be reimbursed to the settling carrier as follows:

- When it is established in which airline's custody the mishandling (meaning damage, delay, loss, or pilferage) occurred, that airline accepts the claim settlement arising from such mishandling as incurred by the settling carrier.
- When it is not established which airline is responsible, each carrying airline that participated in the carriage of the passenger shall share the claim settlement on the basis of the flown mileage between all ticketed points of each carrying airline.
- Reason for loss codes and fault stations are for in house use only, they do not constitute proof of error in proration claims and delivery charges.

Within sixty days of the date of payment the claim receiving airline will send a prorate request to the other participating or responsible airline(s) at their baggage prorate office, providing them with relevant claim settlement documents. The IATA currency exchange rate on the date of flight should be applied in the calculation of the amount to prorate. No additional administration fees are subject of the request of payment sent by the claim receiving airline.

When any type of marketing/commercial, partner, or code share agreement exists, the prorate request will be sent to the Operating Carrier (if it is an IATA carrier and thus subject to proration). The Operating and Marketing Carrier may re-charge each other depending on their established agreements.

If a prorate notice is not given on time by the carrier receiving the claim, future acceptance of a similar notice will remain at the discretion of the participating or responsible airline(s).

The list of the mandatory documents requested to be provided for a prorate request are outlined in the IATA Resolution 780 (including information such as the passenger ticket number, a copy of the baggage tag, a copy of the claim prepared by the passenger, etc.).



The list of agreed settlements in the form of amounts payable by responsible airline(s) shall not be uploaded into the IATA Clearing House (ICH) to action the payment(s) until an agreement between the respective baggage prorate offices of the participating airline(s) has been made. The upload must have attached the:

- Baggage Tracing System reference number(s)
- Date of Flight(s) and
- Agreement of acceptance between the respective baggage prorate offices.

In the event the participating or responsible airline(s) do not respond within sixty days from the date of the request for payment and in order to action the proration of such claim, a proof of the initial request or claim settlement sent by the claim receiving airline may be uploaded in lieu of the agreement of acceptance.

In case the airline receiving the claim uses transportation in lieu of cash to settle the total claim, the airline should not request proration settlement from any other airline. If the airline receiving the claim uses transportation in lieu of cash to settle a portion of the claim, such airline should bill the other claim participating airline(s) its prorated share of the amount of the settlement not covered by transportation in lieu of cash.

There are some agreements on baggage prorating that might exist between airlines, stating that airlines might not prorate each other if they are within the same alliance.

There is no prorating on delivery expenses. Delivery costs from the airport to the passenger may be recharged by the delivering carrier (not the delivering vendor) to the airline responsible for the mishandling.

The amount recharged shall be supported by proof of the cost incurred either by the file reference (to allow the receiving airline to check the baggage tracing system files using the available transactions within the system) or, if there is no compatible system being used, and/or a non-IATA Carrier, by a copy of the file report.

Appendix

Area	Corresponding Resolutions and Recommended Practices
Baggage Provisions	IATA Resolution 302 – Baggage Provision Selection Criteria IATA Recommended Practice 1788 – Ticketing and baggage regulations for free and reduced transportation
Baggage Reservation	A4A/IATA Reservation Interline Message Procedures (AIRIMP) Recommended Practice 1790c- Chargeable Baggage Related Service
Baggage Ticketing	IATA Resolution 722 – Ticket General Procedures and Definitions IATA Resolution 722 – Electronic Miscellaneous Document (EMD) – General Procedures and Definitions
Baggage Operational handling	IATA Resolution 780 – Form of Interline Traffic Agreement IATA Resolution 740 – Form of Interline Baggage Tag IATA Resolution 769 – Baggage Tag Issuer Codes IATA Resolution 754 – Profiles of Interline Baggage Claims and Proof of Fault for Baggage Prorates IATA Resolution 765 – Interline Connecting Time Intervals IATA Resolution 743 – Found and unclaimed checked baggage IATA Recommended Practice 1739 – Passenger/Baggage Reconciliation Procedures IATA Recommended Practice 1744 – Local Baggage Committee Bylaws, Terms of Reference and Operating Rules IATA Recommended Practice 1749 – Carriage of Carry-on Baggage
Reporting and Settlement	Revenue Accounting Manual (RAM)

Other tools and utilities

Electronic Miscellaneous Document (EMD) model General Business Requirements (GBR)	Available in the Standard Setting Workspace under the IATA Ticketing Group page on the Standard Setting Workspace .
Interline EMD Baggage Implementation Guide	Available in the IATA Standard Setting Workspace under the Interline EMD Baggage Working Group page