RFID Bag Tag Initiative

Fact Sheet

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) 75th Annual General Meeting (AGM) unanimously adopted a resolution supporting the global deployment of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) for baggage tracking and the implementation of modern baggage messaging standards to more accurately track passengers' baggage in real time across key points in the journey. Under the resolution airlines committed to transition from bar-coded baggage labels to baggage labels including RFID inlays in addition to the existing barcode. Airlines also committed to using the RFID data provided to proactively identify mishandled baggage and enact processes with airports and ground handlers that prevent mishandling.

- RFID or radio frequency identification is a form of wireless communication that can be used to track objects equipped with an RFID-embedded chip.
- Today, the vast majority of bags are checked and tracked using bar code technology; however, RFID is a more cost-efficient method to achieve the industry's target of 100% bag tracking than using existing bar code technology.
- An RFID-chip (or inlay) produces a very low energy signal when interrogated by a reader. This allows bags to be tracked virtually at any point in the journey. The RFID signal does not interfere with any aircraft systems.
- RFID already is used extensively in aviation, for example in the tracking of high-value aircraft parts and components and also for things such as ramp equipment and ULDs. Some airlines and airports individually have also introduced RFID bag tracking.
- RFID was selected over other potential bag tracking solutions owing to the combination of reliability, maturity, widespread availability and cost. RFID achieves a read rate of 99-100%, making it the leading technology for ensuring accurate bag tracking.
- Benefits of RFID include cost savings from improved end to end baggage tracking leading to a reduction in mishandling bags, improved aircraft loading/offloading leading to fewer delays, higher automation and reduction in mishandled baggage.
- Introducing RFID will provide the data that allows airlines to track the bag through all airport processes. This will result in operational improvements that reduce the number of mishandled bags and provide a better experience for air travelers.
- The IATA standard for RFID use, Recommended Practice 1740C, has been updated to reflect the latest developments in the technology and to include a set of tests to ensure a global standard of performance that is sufficient for baggage tracking.

More information on the IATA RFID standard for interline baggage, the RFID implementation guide and the activities undertaken to support its implementation in the aviation industry can be found at www.iata.org/RFID.