



Working From Heights

SAFETY BULLETIN

In this issue of Inside Choice Aviation, we want to stress the importance of how serious falls from height remain one of the most serious hazards in aviation ground operations. These incidents have life long lasting impacts on our employees, their families, and company operations. In support of Choice Aviation Services' commitment to a zero-injury workplace, the Ground Operations Standards Group (GOS) has identified **falls from height as the highest severity cause of injury** across the industry.

Industry data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Incident Data Exchange (IDX) for the period **January 2019 to March 2021** confirms that fall-related incidents continue to be a leading source of serious injury in ground handling environments.

Following this analysis, IATA reviewed existing procedures in the **IATA Ground Operations Manual (IGOM)** and **Airport Handling Manual (AHM)** and strengthened several standards to close identified safety gaps. Choice Aviation Services has adopted these best practices as part of our operational safety program.



Key Safety Enhancements

1. GSE-to-Aircraft Interface Gap

While minimum spacing is addressed by the no-touch policy, a maximum safe gap is now defined:

IGOM 3.1.3.2 – The gap between GSE and aircraft shall not allow a person or large piece of equipment to fall through. As a guideline, a gap of 5 cm (2 inches) or two fingers should be maintained between the device and the aircraft.

2. Maintenance Stairs Usage

Enhanced procedures under **IGOM 3.1.3.3** require proper positioning, securing of stairs, and continuous use of handrails when ascending or descending.

3. Safety Rails and Equipment Inspections

Safety rails must be installed where required, and all Ground Support Equipment (GSE) must undergo serviceability checks prior to initial use each shift. Equipment must be maintained in accordance with **AHM 917 – Basic Minimum Preventive Maintenance Program**.

4. Training Requirements

Updated training standards under **AHM 1100** include:

- **RMP03 – Airside Driving**
- **RMP14 – GSE Operations**

Only trained and authorized personnel may operate GSE.

5. Cabin Door Fall Protection

Aircraft cabin doors may only be opened or left open if:

- A Passenger Boarding Bridge (PBB) or approved GSE platform is positioned at final height, or
- An appropriate fall prevention device is in place.

An appropriate fall prevention device includes equipment designed to prevent a person from falling, such as industrial safety nets, catch platforms, or approved safety harness systems (IGOM 4.4.2.1).

IMPORTANT

A standard cabin door strap is **not** considered an acceptable fall prevention device.



SAFETY REMINDER

Falls from height are **entirely preventable** when procedures are followed. Always verify equipment positioning, inspect GSE before use, use installed safety systems, and report unsafe conditions immediately. Safety is everyone's responsibility—protecting yourself protects your team and our company.