

Hab Dich! German Ops Gotchas

David Mumford

30 July, 2024



OPSGROUP members have reported several strange things happening at airports in Germany recently. We asked the German Aviation Authority and a few local handling agents and FBOs, who confirmed these were not isolated incidents. So here's the lowdown on these latest German Ops Gotchas...



#1: The Baggage Hold Gotcha

After a few back-and-forth emails with the German Aviation Authority (*LBA - Luftfahrt-Bundesamt, website here*), the following is what applies.

If you are operating a **commercial flight** (i.e. Part 135) out of a German airport, and your aircraft has an inflight-accessible baggage hold, then **ALL baggage will be required to be screened and deemed cabin baggage**. Size isn't considered, so it could be a Citation or an Airbus 330.

This means that passengers won't be able to take any security-restricted items in their luggage. If they want to carry something sharp, or perhaps some hunting gear, then this would need to have some big lockable box.

You can apply for **approval to carry prohibited items** from the Ministry of the Interior BMI. The list of goods is here. However, LBA have said that it is not an exhaustive list, and the screener shall have the final judgement.

Bottom line, if you are flying most bizav aircraft out of a German airport and you have something that could be "dangerous", you are likely to have the item confiscated if screened correctly.

Possible solution: one member has reported that authorities accepted in their AOC to **install a wire-lock to the “impact-curtain”**, so it is not easy to access the compartment during flight.



#2: Sneaky Security Checks

Jan 2025 update: We're now hearing that the LBA have started charging operators for these checks! One member reported receiving a 330 Euro invoice for a check that took place at EDDM/Munich. It seems that opting-out of these checks is not possible!

These are not ramp checks, they are “security checks” performed by LBA staff to see whether crew follow the right security procedures.

They basically try to enter the aircraft, and your job is to make sure you stop them. So man the doors! **Check their identity**, make sure they're wearing **the right ID cards**, and you will have passed the test. Another common thing is that they **leave a note behind the GPU hatch door** to check if you do the security check properly.

EDDS/Stuttgart is one of the top spots for this, but we've had reports of this happening at **EDDV/Hannover** and other airports in Germany too.

We asked LBA about this one too. They reference EU Implementing Regulation 2015/1998 which is all about *basic standards on aviation security*. We read it, and couldn't find anything in it warning flight crew to watch out for people in yellow jackets trying to trick them by switching their ID cards around and leaving weird notes on their aircraft.

So we don't like this one very much. Security is a team effort, and flight crew are a big part of this. Tricking them into compliance like schoolchildren isn't the way to go.



#3 Fuel Payments

The simple rule we're all used to: **if you're a commercial flight, you don't pay tax on fuel**. So you fuel up, pay the bill, then if you're a commercial flight you get Customs to issue you a refund of the fuel tax.

Problem is, what's been happening more often recently is that **Customs have not been showing up to aircraft** - presumably due to lack of staff.

We also heard one recent case where Customs **refused to accept an AOC** of a commercial flight, and the operators had to pay the associated taxes with a private operation.

Possible solution: one of the local handlers recommends that operators make sure they **always carry the charter contract** for the flight on board, along with the AOC. And if Customs don't show up for the refund, you can **fill in a form** and apply after the flight. Here's a copy. Email it to: poststelle.hza-potsdam@zoll.bund.de

Been to Germany recently and know any more Ops Gotchas to watch out for? Let us know.