Paris Le Bourget: Recent Crew Reports

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Quick Summary

- **LFPB/Paris Le Bourget is one of the airports people always want to know about, and we've got a bunch of recent OPSGROUP member reports from trips there.**
- **Some trips went smoothly, but others came with things to watch out for: long waits for passport control, customs penalties for undeclared cash, thorough SAFA and police checks, confusing APU limits, and tricky arrivals.**

Waiting for passport control

The latest issue in our LFPB reports is **how passengers are processed within the FBO**.

One crew reported their international passengers waited nearly 90 minutes for officers to arrive. When they did, they took each passenger into a private room one by one. Jetex says their passengers now hand over passports, give fingerprints, and have photos taken. Signature told us these checks used to happen in a police van on the ramp, but now they're done inside the FBO since EES started.

FBOs say delays depend on when border police are available. Once officers arrive, it can take another 10 mins to set up their computers.

One crew waited 45 minutes for customs to come to the FBO so passengers could claim VAT refunds. Each passenger was then processed individually.

It's hard to predict how long checks will take on any visit. If you're short on time, leave some extra margin.

The cash story that ended in a fine

At first, this seemed like a typical customs delay: *“We experienced a delay due to customs. PAX had to wait 15 minutes after they had arrived at the FBO for customs to arrive. They then took another 30 minutes to process 5 PAX. We eventually departed an hour behind schedule.”*

But that wasn’t the end of it. Customs found over $10,000 in petty cash on board and imposed a penalty because it hadn’t been declared. The cash hadn’t left the aircraft the whole trip, but it still got hit with a 10% penalty! The aircraft couldn’t leave until this was resolved, which added another two hours to the delay.

So declare any cash in advance and be prepared to explain its source. They also said that bags left on board were searched by customs.

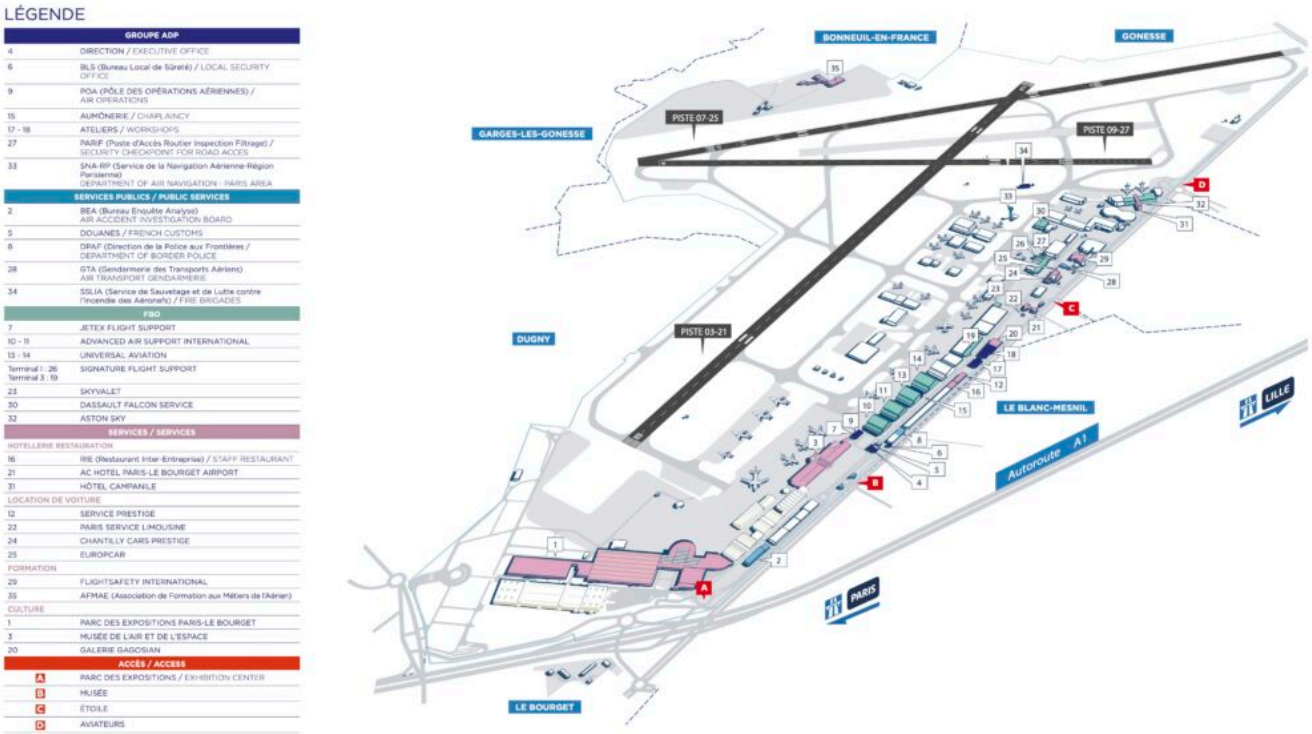
A closer look on the ramp

SAFA checks happen often enough at LFPB and can be thorough, but crews say the latest inspectors have been very professional and even “pleasant”.

One instance was of two inspectors turning up around an hour prior to departure and spending 30 minutes going through the docs, the FPL, the QRH and cabin safety equipment. They also asked about the oceanic planning. Another crew had a very similar 30 min check. The inspectors were very practical in their feedback and gave some very useful tips on how to find the docs on the iPad.

Another member said the **French police checked to see whether a flight was in fact private rather than commercial.** They looked at the fuel docs, went into the cabin and asked a passenger to confirm that they were the owner.

Keep all your paperwork together and easy to access. You can read more about these checks in our Paris Ramp Checks article.



APU rules

APU rules come up often in reports, and the official limits depend on your stand. If ground air and power are available, **APU use is limited to 10 mins before departure and 5 mins after arrival.** If they aren't, the limits are 45 mins before departure and 20 mins after arrival. It can get a little confusing when FBOs have mobile GPUs, so check with them which limit applies to your stand.

Member reports:

- *2025 report: 60 minutes of APU use before departure, with crews expected to use a GPU.*
- *Feb 2026: 10 minutes before departure and 5 minutes after arrival, matching the limits for a stand with ground air and power. However, their Gulfstream had electrical issues when started on external power.*

The local police checks APU use, and ACNUSA (the Airport Nuisance Authority) can issue **fines of up to €20,000.** Both the operator and the PIC may be liable. A few safety exemptions are available, but you'll need to explain why they apply.

Hot weather makes these restrictions harder to manage. During a 2026 heatwave, one FBO got special permission for extra APU time on a case-by-case basis. Check with your handler for the latest limits, especially in hot weather, and arrange a GPU for departure. For more on the rules, exemptions, and fines, see our article.

Brief the arrival

Always review the arrival sequence before you get there. On one VELOL 9E arrival, the crew wasn't sure which of the five options they'd get. They asked ATC and were vectored to final. Another flight went from VELOL to KOLIV, joined the KOLIV initial, and then the ILS.

Paris traffic can also often mean speed reductions and a steep or late descent. One crew described a slam-dunk arrival, while another slowed significantly to fit in with traffic to CDG.

Check the latest runway conditions before arrival too. Reports mention wet conditions, birds, nearby VFR traffic, and braking action that was worse than expected. One Falcon 900 crew skipped the midfield exit to avoid heavy braking.

And sometimes it's just easy!

There are also loads of positive reports:

- **A Smooth Visit, with a Customs Delay on Departure**
  October 2026 | GLF5
  "Our arrival from LFMN was straightforward. We had no customs formalities on arrival, and the FBO team was excellent. Overall, it was a positive experience, apart from the delay waiting for customs."
- **Don't Let the Arrival Catch You Off Guard**
  April 2026 | GLEX
  "ATC was surprisingly smooth. No complaints. The Flight Pro rep went above and beyond. Ramp was easy, parking was no issue, and customs/immigration was completely smooth with no friction."
- **Easy to Use**

June 2026 | F900
“The FBO is right there so it is easily walkable. Luggage was transported by the handler. Inbound: None for crew on arrival.”

Another Paris option: LFPM/Villaroche

If you’re flying within the Schengen area, consider LFPM/Paris Villaroche. It’s southeast of the city and offers handling by Elyxan. There are no customs, and the 37-tonne operating weight so it’s not suitable for all flights. But depending on your route and aircraft, it could be a good alternative to LFPB.

 For more info, contact Elyxan Aviation: ops@elyxan-aviation.fr | +33 6 58 83 66 25



Have you been to LFPB recently? Let us know how it went

A few lines about your visit will help the next crew. Send us an Airport Spy report and let us know what you saw – parking, fuel, handling, customs, any new procedures etc. Anything you wish you’d known prior to your arrival is useful.



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