A4A Bulletin

Bulletin 2020.1
Guidelines for Reduced Operations and Decommissioning of Fuel Facilities and Equipment due to Coronavirus
April 2020

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The novel Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) global pandemic is causing unprecedented disruption to aviation operations. Airlines for America is issuing the following guidance to users of ATA103. The safety of personnel and aircraft are top priorities – if their safety cannot be managed due to COVID-19, **operators shall immediately notify the affected airlines**. Where flight reductions and/or mandatory quarantines warrant a reduction in fuel operations, the following guidelines may be used.

Mandatory requirements

- In accordance with ATA103 paragraphs 2.1.9 and 2.1.3, operators shall notify airlines of equipment and resources taken out of service and when equipment is placed back into operation. Equipment that is out of service shall be noted in records.
- Fuel facility and into-plane operators shall have written plans for operations with reduced resources, reduced fuel movements/deliveries, and complete shutdown/startup of facilities.
- All operators shall conduct and record a risk assessment prior to enacting continuity plans. Operators should contact airlines for assistance to conduct a proper risk assessment.
- Operators shall keep adequate records of any procedural changes and their justification.
- All requirements in A4A Bulletin 2017.2 shall be followed for filter monitors in use.
- Filter elements that have partially or completely dried out shall not be reused.
- Fuel in long-term storage shall be tested in accordance with ATA103 paragraph 2.5.7.2.
- Fuel and equipment shall not be treated with biocide. In accordance with ATA103 paragraph 2.1.5, affected airlines shall be notified about microbial or other fuel contamination findings.

General guidelines

Before making operational changes, site-specific risk assessments shall be completed, and management of change documented.

For storage facilities:

- Move tank farm fuel in a first-in, first-out manner.
- Create written procedures for shutdown and startup processes.
- Keep fuel hoses wetted with fuel, even when fuel hose use is reduced or eliminated.
- Engage local regulators to obtain deferrals of routine inspections that require travel by a third-party contractor to your facility (e.g., API653 inspections, cathodic protection surveys, meter calibrations, etc.). Remember that all facilities will be deferring similar inspections; third-party contractors will be in high demand once operations return to normal and may not be able to come to your facility immediately.
- Filter vessels shall be sumped under flow to avoid dangerous conditions due to air entrained in filter vessels and element damage due to drying out.
- Regularly sump filter vessels, under flow, to manage water, contaminants, and microbials.
- Periodically operate valves, motors, and other moving components to prevent seizing.

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- Conduct periodic tank-to-tank transfers to promote fuel movement. Note: tank transfers do not alter the static stock status in accordance with ATA103 paragraph 2.5.7.2.

For hydrant systems:

- Where possible, routinely circulate hydrant lines/loops back to fuel farm. This prevents fuel from entering a stagnant condition and will combat microbial growth/other problems.
- Where it can be done safely, consider using hydrant systems to load refueler trucks. This helps turnover hydrant fuel and flush dead legs, especially when entire concourses are shut down. Perform a risk assessment with all relevant parties including airlines, fire marshal and airport authority. Note: additional approvals may be required from local authorities.
- Periodically operate valves, pumps, and other moving components to prevent seizing.
- If isolating a hydrant system/loop, be mindful of fuel thermal expansion. Isolating parts of a pressurized hydrant system can cause leaks/spills as fuel expands in warmer weather.
- It is not recommended to depressurize hydrant systems. Depressurization may allow water to enter the hydrant system.
- Leak detection testing shall be done at the frequency listed in ATA 103 paragraph 2.7.6.1.
- Regularly sump low points to eliminate water, contaminants, and microbial growth.

For refueling equipment:

- In general, it is best to keep equipment fuel wet and moving. Any opportunity to rotate equipment into use throughout the day or across the airport, should be taken.
- Make best efforts to operate each piece of refueling equipment at least once a week.
- At a minimum, utilize or circulate fueling equipment with new fuel once a month. Either rotate equipment into fueling operations or recirculate fuel internally or on a test stand.
- Record equipment out-of-service status on appropriate forms.
- Periodically operate valves, engines, and other moving components to prevent seizing.
- Filter vessels must be sumped under flow to avoid dangerous conditions due to air entrained in filter vessels and element damage due to drying out.
- Defer preventive maintenance until equipment cycles out of use rotation, if possible.
- Track and record all asset usage to develop an adequate equipment rotation schedule and identify equipment that needs to be recirculated internally or on a test stand.
- Be mindful of fuel velocities–enough flow helps manage contaminants and microbial growth.
- Equipment in full or reduced service shall be maintained according to full ATA103 standards.
- Decommission fueling equipment that is unable to be used or circulated once per month or is expected to remain unused for an extended time. Follow OEM guidance for proper long-term storage to prevent damage to components.
- Keep all fuel hoses wetted with fuel. Drying out hoses will cause cracking/ leaks.

Questions or requests for further information should be submitted to fuel@airlines.org

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