AUSTRALIAN
AIRPORTS
ASSOCIATION

AIRPORT
SAFETY WEEK
16 - 20 October 2023

Airport Safety Week: Day 3 Toolbox Talk – Sustainability Practices to Reduce Foreign Object Debris on Airport

Foreign Object Debris (FOD) poses a significant risk to airport operations, aircraft safety, and the environment. FOD refers to any object, substance, or debris that is not part of an aircraft or its components and can cause damage or injury when it encounters aircraft during take off, landing, or taxiing. To mitigate this risk, airports must adopt sustainable practices that focus on prevention, detection, and removal of FOD.

Here are some sustainability practices that can effectively reduce the risk of FOD on airports:

1. Airports can implement regular maintenance and inspection programs to identify and address potential sources of FOD. This includes conducting routine inspections of runways, taxiways, aprons, and other areas where FOD is likely to accumulate. By identifying and removing debris promptly, airports can prevent FOD from becoming a hazard to aircraft. Additionally, airports can invest in advanced technology such as FOD detection systems, which use sensors and cameras to detect and alert airport personnel of any potential FOD on the airfield. These systems can significantly reduce the risk of FOD by providing real-time information and enabling quick response.

2. Airports can promote sustainable waste management practices to minimise the generation of FOD. This includes implementing recycling programs for materials commonly found on the airfield, such as plastic bottles, food containers, and packaging materials. By diverting these materials from landfills, airports can reduce the risk of FOD and contribute to a more sustainable environment. Furthermore, airports can collaborate with airlines, ground handling companies, and other stakeholders to develop waste reduction strategies and encourage the use of eco-friendly materials. Airports can promote the use of biodegradable or compostable packaging materials in airport shops and restaurants to reduce the risk of FOD.

3. Airports can prioritise vegetation management to prevent FOD caused by wildlife. Birds and other wildlife can pose a significant risk to aircraft, especially during take off and landing. By implementing sustainable vegetation management practices, airports can reduce the attractiveness of the airfield to wildlife, thus minimising the risk of FOD. This can include regular

mowing, trimming, and removal of vegetation that attracts birds and other wildlife. Additionally, airports can invest in bird control measures such as bird deterrent systems, habitat modification, and bird relocation programs to further reduce the risk of FOD caused by wildlife.

4. Airports can educate and engage airport personnel, airline staff, and passengers on the importance of FOD prevention. By raising awareness about the risks associated with FOD and promoting responsible behaviour, airports can create a culture of FOD prevention. This can include providing training programs for airport personnel and airline staff on FOD prevention and reporting procedures. Additionally, airports can display informative signage and distribute educational materials to passengers, highlighting the importance of not littering and reporting any FOD they may come across.

Sustainable practices play a crucial role in reducing the risk of FOD on airports. By implementing regular maintenance and inspection programs, promoting sustainable waste management, prioritising vegetation management, and educating stakeholders, airports can effectively mitigate the risk of FOD. These practices not only enhance aircraft safety and airport operations but also contribute to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly aviation industry.

Additional Resources:

Implementing a FOD Damage Control Procedure	https://www.aerosweep.com/implementing-a-foreign-object-debris-damage-control-procedure-fod-contro-plan-runway-airport-sweeper
FAA Foreign Object Debris Program	https://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_safety/fod/
Don't FOD-get about it	https://www.bne.com.au/blog/behind-scenes/foreign-object-debris

ACTIVITY: FOD-WALK