
Air Cargo Operations: Acceptance, Handling, Documentation and Cargo Flow Course

19 – 23 October 2026
Barcelona





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Programme Summary

Air cargo operations is the subject of this one-week training course for air cargo, airline and freight forwarding managers and supervisors, ending in an air cargo operations control plan for one cargo flow. Errors in acceptance, documents and handover are costly because they surface late, at the aircraft or at the consignee. The programme moves from the cargo chain and its rules through diagnosis of failures to design of controls, then applies them to one flow. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this air cargo operations programme for managers from mixed organisations.

The Business Case

A consignment that is accepted with an incomplete document, built into a unit badly or handed over without a record can cost a flight slot, a claim or a delay for the customer. When corrections happen at the last minute, effort is spent on recovery rather than prevention. Managers who control the chain from acceptance to handover reduce rework and protect service.

- Handling Damage and Claims: Fall as acceptance checks and build-up rules are applied the same way on every shift.
- Shipment Dwell Time: Shortens as documents are complete before cargo reaches the warehouse and ramp.
- Rejected or Offloaded Cargo: Reduces as special cargo and dangerous goods indicators are caught at the first check.

Principles and Evidence Base

- IATA Cargo Handling Manual: Its procedures for acceptance, build-up and handover frame the chain map in Session 1 and the standard work design in Session 4.
- IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations: Their classification, packing and marking requirements shape the awareness checks in Sessions 2 and 4.
- e-AWB: Its electronic air waybill procedures structure the documentation review in Session 2 and the data controls in Session 4.

Intended Participants

- Cargo station managers who answer for acceptance, warehouse and ramp performance.
- Airline cargo supervisors who coordinate load planning with handling agents.
- Freight forwarding managers who release consignments to carriers and monitor handover.
- Quality and service leads who investigate damage, delay and claims.



Typical settings include airline cargo departments, ground handling companies, freight forwarders and airport cargo terminals.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to describe the stages of the air cargo chain and the controls that apply at each stage.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose acceptance and documentation failures from shipment records.
3. Participants will be able to classify special cargo and recognise dangerous goods indicators that require specialist action.
4. Participants will be able to evaluate unit build-up and load plans against handling rules.
5. Participants will be able to construct acceptance and handover controls with clear responsibilities.
6. Participants will be able to justify an air cargo operations control plan to station and airline leadership.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Air Cargo Operations Principles and the Cargo Chain

Which stages does cargo pass through, and where is control needed?

- Air Cargo Chain Map
- Station Role and Responsibility Matrix
- IATA Cargo Handling Manual Procedure Map
- Service Level Measures Table
- Cargo Terminal Layout Sketch

Day 2: Diagnosing Acceptance and Documentation Failures

Why do consignments arrive late, wrong or incomplete?

- Acceptance Checklist Review
- Air Waybill Error Log
- e-AWB Data Quality Review
- Dangerous Goods Indicator Screening Sheet
- Offload and Rejection Cause Chart

Day 3: Diagnosing Handling, Build-Up and Special Cargo

Where do damage, delay and handover errors enter the flow?

- Unit Load Device Build-Up Inspection Sheet
- Load Plan and Weight Balance Review
- Special Cargo Handling Matrix
- Damage and Claims Pareto Chart
- Dwell Time Flow Chart



Day 4: Designing Acceptance and Handover Controls

What controls and standard work keep the chain reliable?

- Acceptance Gate Standard
- Dangerous Goods Awareness Escalation Route
- Build-Up Standard Work Sheet
- Handover Record Template
- Daily Cargo Flow Review Board

Day 5: Applying Controls to One Cargo Flow

Does the control plan hold when it is tested on one flow?

- Applying the Session 2 Error Log to a Live Flow
- Testing the Session 3 Build-Up Inspection
- Checking the Session 4 Acceptance Gate
- Revising the Plan after Peer Feedback
- Completing the Air Cargo Operations Control Plan

Methodology

The programme uses a case analysis method built on anonymised shipment records, air waybill extracts and short written cases from airline and handling operations. Participants work in small groups on one cargo flow, defend choices to peers who act as station leadership, handling agent and customer colleagues, and receive facilitator feedback.

- Suggested activity: Tracing a damaged consignment back to its acceptance record.
- Suggested activity: Screening a set of consignments for dangerous goods indicators.
- Suggested activity: Rewriting a handover record that omits a responsibility.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes an air cargo operations control plan for one cargo flow. It holds a chain map, an error analysis, acceptance and build-up standards, an escalation route for special cargo and a handover record. The plan is used at work to brief shift teams, agree responsibilities with handling partners and guide daily reviews.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is air cargo operations suitable for managers who have not worked in a cargo station?

Yes. Air cargo operations is taught from the chain upward and assumes responsibility for people or consignments, not station experience.

Which references does air cargo operations rest on in this programme?

Air cargo operations here rests on the IATA Cargo Handling Manual, the IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations and e-AWB procedures.

How is the air cargo operations control plan used at work?

You use the air cargo operations control plan to brief shift teams, agree responsibilities with handling partners and guide daily reviews.

How does air cargo operations differ from a programme on freight forwarding sales?

Air cargo operations centres on acceptance, handling and handover control, while freight forwarding sales centres on customers, rates and contracts.