



Airports and airport systems: Organization and administration

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Airport Planning & Management, pp29-pp52, 2004, 5th edition*



Outline

- **Airport ownership and operation**
- **The airport organization chart**
- **Airport management as a career**
- **The airport manager and public relations**



Introduction

- Whether privately owned or part of a public system, there are characteristics of the administrative and organizational structure of an airport.
- The number of people employed at a given airport can range from as few as one, at the smallest of general aviation facilities, to as many as 50,000 at the world's largest airport authorities.
- Those airports that employ fewer numbers of people expect these people to accept a wider range of responsibilities.



Airport Ownership and operation

- Public airports in the United States are owned and operated under a variety of organizational and jurisdictional arrangements.
- In some cases, a commercial airport is owned by one or more of these governmental entities but operated by a separate public body, such as an airport authority specifically created for the purpose of managing the airport.
- Legal responsibility for day-to-day operation and administration can be vested in any of five kinds of governmental or public entities: a municipal or county government, a multipurpose port authority, an airport authority, a state government, or the federal government.



Airport Ownership and operation (cont.)

- A typical **municipally operated airport** is city owned and run as a department of the city, with policy direction by the city council and, in some cases, by a separate airport commission or advisory board.
- **Port authorities** are legally chartered institutions with the status of public corporations that operate a variety of publicly owned facilities, such as harbors, airports, toll roads, and bridges.
- Another type of arrangement is the single-purpose **airport authority**.
- **State-operated airports** are typically managed by the state's department of transportation.



Airport privatization

- Privatization refers to shifting governmental functions and responsibilities, in whole or in part, to the private sector.
- The most extensive privatizations involve the sale or lease of public assets.
- Airport privatization, in particular, typically involves the lease of airport property and/or facilities to a private company to build, operate, and/or manage commercial services offered at the airport.
- Most services now performed at large commercial airports, such as airline ticketing, baggage handling, cleaning, retail concessions, and ground transportation, are provided by private firms.

The airport organization chart

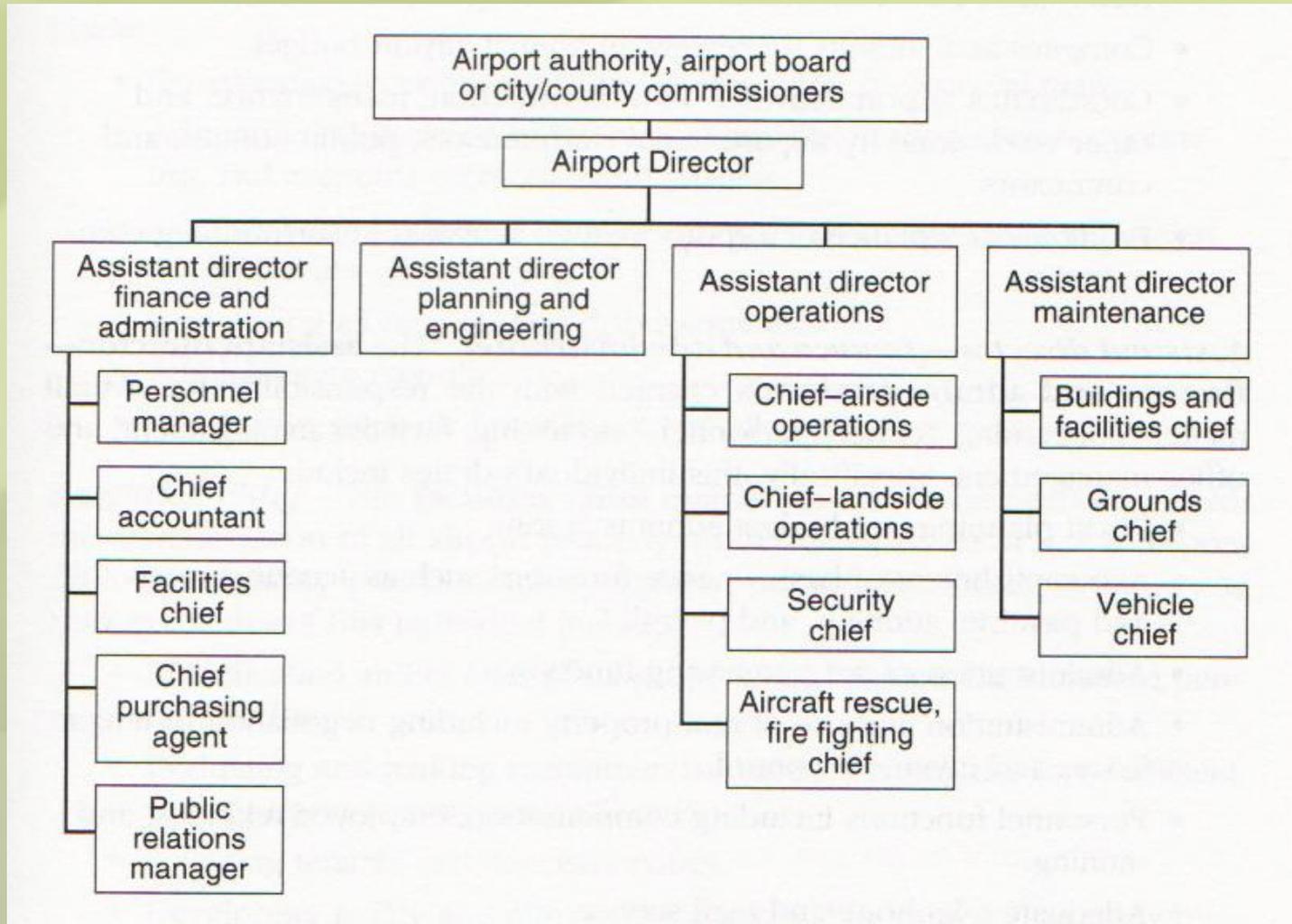


Figure 2-1. Typical airport management organization chart.



Airport management as a career

- There are many career paths within the field of airport management as evidenced by the wide variety of job descriptions under the previous section.
- Between these two extremes is the manager of a municipally owned or privately owned airport where there are a limited number of scheduled airline flights each day.
- Based at the airport are several fixed-base operators (FBOs) and a number of aircraft owned by individuals and corporations.
- In the early days of aviation, an individual could become an airport manager if he or she was a pilot and had several years of experience in some segment of the industry.



Airport management as a career (cont.)

- Today an airport manager must be primarily a skilled and experienced executive with a broad background in all facets of aviation and management in general.
- Almost every airport manager's job situation is unique in some major respects because of the wide variety of size of airport and type of ownership and operation.
- Even the job title varies.
- Director of aviation, airport superintendent, executive director, airport director, general manager, and other titles are often used instead of airport manager.



Duties of an airport manager

- An airport manager is often part landlord and part business executive.
- As a landlord, the safe condition and operation of the airport is the manager's greatest responsibility.
- The maintenance of the airport buildings and land is also important.
- As a business executive, the manager is in charge of public relations; financial planning; profitable and efficient day-to-day operation; and coordination of airline, concession, and airport facilities to best serve the tenants and flying public.

Duties of an airport manager (cont.)



- The manager is in contact with concessionaires who operate restaurants, shops, and parking facilities, and with the traveling public.
- The size of the airport and the services it offers its tenants and the public play an important part in determining the airport manager's specific duties.
- The manager interprets the functions and activities of the airport to the city or other local government and to the public.
- Not all of these duties are required of all managers of airports.



Education and training

- The major requirement for the job of airport manager is business and administrative ability; this means the ability to make decisions, to coordinate details, to direct the work of others, and to work smoothly with many kinds of people.
- College courses in engineering; management; accounting; finance and economics; business and aviation law; and airline, general aviation, and airport management are good preparation for a career in airport management.
- A number of the primary airports in the United States have 1- or 2-year internship programs that train college graduates for various aspects of airport management.



Education and training (cont.)

- A minimum of 3 years of work experience in airport management, an original paper on an airport problem, and the completion of a comprehensive examination are the major requirements of the accreditation program.
- The applicant must also be at least 21 years of age and of good moral character.
- Once an airport manager has completed these requirements the person may use the initials A.A.E. (Accredited Airport Executive) after his or her name and is eligible to vote at the business meetings of the American Association of Airport Executives

The airport manager and public relation



- Unquestionably, one of the most important and challenging aspects of an airport manager's job is that of public relations.
- **Public relations** is the management function that attempts to create goodwill for an organization and its products, services, or ideals with groups of people who can affect its present and future welfare.
- Aviation has not been exempted from the controversies that inevitably are part of any endeavor affecting or touching the lives of a large number of people.
- The net result is that every airport has an image—either good or bad.

The airport manager and public relation(cont.)



- The great problems of airports are always related to the original and elemental images resulting from the collective opinions of the public.
- These images are really the balancing or compensating factors that correspond with the problems the public encounters with airports.
- The industry has the technology and resources to resolve many of the problems of the airport-airway system; however, the important link or catalyst in bringing together technology and community opinion is the airport public relations effort.
- Both the airport and the community have a responsibility to work together to solve their mutual problems, attain desired goals, and ultimately achieve a better community.



The airport manager and public relation(cont.)

- Regardless of the size of an airport, there are several basic principles underlying the public relations process:
 - Every airport and every company and interest on the airport has public relations, whether or not it does anything about them.
 - Public goodwill is the greatest asset that can be enjoyed by any airport, and public opinion is the most powerful force.
 - The basic ingredient of good relations for any airport is integrity.
 - Airport policies and programs that are not in the public interest have no chance of final success.
 - Airport public relations can never be some kind of program that is used only to respond to a negative situation.
 - Airport public relations go far beyond press relations and publicity.



The airport and its public

- Basically, every airport has four “publics” with which it deals, and despite the wide variance in size and scope of activities of airports, these publics are basically the same for all airports:
 - *The external business public.*
 - *The external general public.*
 - *The internal business public.*
 - *The internal employee public.*
- These are the most important airport publics.
- These are the sources of vital information that management must have in order to know what and how it is doing, and they are the ones who must be informed and persuaded if any airport objective is to be achieved.



Public relations objectives

- The primary objectives of an airport's public relations activities are as follows:
 - Establishing the airport in the minds of the external public as a facility that is dedicated to serving the public interest
 - Communicating with the external public with the goal of establishing and building goodwill
 - Answering general and environmental complaints on an individual basis
 - Establishing good working relationships with internal business publics whose interests are similar to those of airport management.
 - Promoting programs designed to enhance and improve employee morale.



Concluding remarks

- Each airport in the United States is unique in its organizational and administrative structure.
- Each airport is uniquely subject to rules, regulations, and policies applicable to the airport's operational characteristics, the ownership structure, and the laws of the local municipality, region, and state in which it's located.
- Conversely, each airport is subject to fundamental regulations mandated by the FAA, the TSA, and state Departments of Transportation, and functions under basic organizational structures that allow for the safe and efficient movement of aircraft, passengers, and cargo in and around the airport.



Concluding remarks (cont.)

- The great challenge in airport management is to establish an ownership and organizational structure that meets the needs of each of the airport's "publics," from direct users of the airport, to airport employees, to the local community.
- In addition, the ownership and organizational structure of an airport must be flexible to adapt to the changing needs of the airport's publics.
- This is not an easy task, although it is one that maintains the excitement of airport management.



Key terms

- municipally operated airport
- port authorities
- airport authority
- state-operated airport
- organization chart
- airport director
- assistant director—finance and administration
- personnel manager
- chief accountant
- facilities chief
- chief purchasing agent



Key terms (cont.)

- manager of public relations
- assistant director—planning and engineering
- assistant director—operations
- chief—airside operations
- chief—landside operations
- security chief
- aircraft rescue/fire fighting chief
- assistant director—maintenance
- building and facilities chief
- grounds chief
- vehicle chief
- public relations