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# Using RFID, Airline Industry Making Progress to Reduce Baggage Mishandling: Report

- According to IATA, 85 percent of airline and airports have complied with electronic baggage tagging

## **requirements**

- **RFID is implemented in 27% of surveyed airports, with higher adoption rates at mega airports**

As the summer travel season begins to heat up, an international organization focused on the global airline industry released a progress report on the implementation of baggage tracking.

International Air Transport Association (IATA) provided an update on a resolution which requires tracking baggage for loading, transfer and arrival as consumers take to the friendly skies. The survey of 155 airlines and 94 airports revealed 44 percent of airlines have fully implemented baggage tracking with 41 percent more in progress.

With 85 percent of airlines now having some sort system implemented for the tracking of luggage, Monika Mejstrikova, IATA Director Ground Operations, said “travelers can have even more confidence that their bags will be at the carousel on arrival.” IATA represents 320 airlines comprising 83 percent of global air traffic.

## **RFID Gaining Wider Use**

Resolution 753 requires airlines to exchange baggage tracking messages with interline partners and their agents. The current baggage messaging infrastructure depends on legacy technologies using costly Type B messaging, according to IATA officials.

This high cost is adversely affecting the implementation of the resolution and contributes to issues with message quality, leading to an increase in baggage mishandling.

Currently, optical barcode scanning is the dominant tracking technology implemented by the majority of airports surveyed, used at 73 percent of facilities.

Tracking using RFID, which is more efficient, is implemented in 27 percent of surveyed airports. Notably, RFID technology has seen higher adoption rates at mega airports, with 54 percent already implementing this advanced tracking system.

## **By the Numbers**

The good news from IATA's perspective is that between 2007 and 2022, baggage mishandling was reduced nearly 60 percent. In 2022, the global rate of mishandled bags was 7.6 per 1,000 passengers—with the majority of these were returned within 48 hours.

“But travelers expect better, and the industry is determined to make further improvements,” said Mejstrikova. “Tracking bags at acceptance, loading, transfer, and delivery will give the industry the data it needs to improve.”

Some key metrics from the survey include:

- 75 percent of airports surveyed have the capability for baggage tracking as per the resolution's standards;
- Variation in airline full adoption rates varies by region: 88 percent in China and North Asia, 60 percent in the Americas, 40 percent in Europe and Asia-Pacific, and 27 percent in Africa; and
- Airport preparedness for Resolution 753 varies by size: 75 percent of mega airports (>40 million) are capable, 85 percent of major airports (25–40 million), 82 percent of large airports (15–25 million) and 61 percent of medium airports (5–15 million).

## **Explaining Resolution 753**

Resolution 753 was adopted in June 2018. IATA this year launched a campaign to assist airlines with the implementation, focusing on collecting data on the implementation status of airlines and providing support to member airlines to develop and execute their implementation

plans.

IATA is leading the industry's transition from Type B to modern baggage messaging based on XML standards. The first pilot to test modern baggage messaging between airport and airlines is planned for launch this year.

"Adopting modern messaging is the equivalent of implementing a new standard, intelligible language for use by airlines, airports, and ground handling staff so they can effectively communicate about passenger luggage," said Mejstrikova. "In addition to helping reduce the number of mishandled bags, implementation also sets the stage for ongoing innovations in baggage management systems."

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