

CARGO chat



every kilo counts



Unexpected interruptions

The grounding of SA Express flights at the end of April when the Civil Aviation Authority suspended their Air Operating Certificate shows how unexpected interruptions to service can happen to any operator.

Most transport segments have built-in recovery time facilitating a Plan B: the express parcel industry operates minute-to-minute and any delay results in red alert.

So what are the perils that can interrupt service delivery. “You name it, it can happen without warning even to the best maintained aircraft fleet,” reports Karl Davids, Chief Operating Office of BidAir Cargo. “International and local safety and security regulations are complex, stringent and strictly policed. If something isn’t right, a flight may be delayed. Even well-maintained aircraft can “go technical”. Fleets are tightly configured and it is prohibitively expensive to keep spare aircraft and

crews on standby “just-in-case” as customers could not absorb the cost.

On international flights, there can be exposure overseas for security, technical reasons or staffing problems due to strikes.

“Talking of strikes,” says Karl, “the incidence of bird strikes is far more common than the layman would guess, including in South African skies and is highly destructive.” This hazard is of such concern to operators that there are full time initiatives to predict, prevent and mitigate such risks. (World Birdstrike Association www.birdstrike.com). Adding to risk profile, as well as birds and bats in the vicinity of airports, there are now drones in those crowded skies.

Nor is it only in the air that the unexpected can interfere with the express logistics flow. Arrive Alive reports that around 23% of LDVs 5% of trucks were involved in accidents over the festive season. “Road haulage and delivery is exposed to motorway congestion, truck breakdowns and hijacking. Consignments may be handed-in insufficiently packaged or wrongly declared. It’s a race against time all day and all night, “says Karl. “Customers don’t want to hear excuses, no matter how valid. They just want their shipment to arrive on time. That’s what keeps everyone in the game running at full speed.”

So next time a cargo flight is delayed, by all means groan but remember that most of the causes are out of the control of the operators. And spare a thought for the stress they incur in striving to implement a Plan B at a moment’s notice to get you back on track.

DEALING WITH DANGEROUS GOODS

A workshop on the transporting of dangerous goods (DG) – including lithium-ion batteries – attracted 40 delegates from Cape Town’s express parcel industry on 6 May. Held at the eco-friendly Hotel Verde, close to the airport, the event was sponsored by BidAir Cargo and presented by Professional Aviation Services.

The content embraced DG categories and applicable regulations, the need for awareness among all employees in the supply chain, concerns such as misdeclarations (accidental and deliberate) and best practice.

“Everyone who deals with aircargo in any capacity – or has access to an aircargo warehouse – has the responsibility to be aware of and compliant with DG regulations,” said David Alexander, General Manager of Professional Aviation Services, setting the scene for the intensive four-hour session. DG processes are especially vital in the courier industry, David explained. “Unlike freight forwarders who deal primarily with businesses, many of whom are regular and frequent shippers, the express parcel industry receives a high proportion of consignments from the public. Uncle Fred in Goodwood has no concept of DG when sending a parcel to a relative



“It’s very encouraging to see that so many companies and their people want to do the right thing.”

– Muriel Sahd, BidAir Cargo; here with Kayley Carelse and Aline Copley

and would not know how to define or label it correctly. Hence the importance of awareness and vigilance on the part of the service provider’s staff.”

Ignorance is not the only cause of misdeclarations. There may be situations, such as where a consignment cleared for carriage by road becomes urgent and is switched to aircargo. All accidental misdeclarations can be addressed through training and education to equip employees to identify DG.

Unfortunately, the industry also has to cope with deliberate misdeclarations where the shipper or intermediary hides

DG in the package and documentation. The “documents and spares” catch-all is an example of this unethical and risky practice. “Because of time pressure, some shippers urge carriers to cut corners with regard to proper packing, labelling and documentation,” said David. “There is no room for compromise when safety is at stake, even if the shipper threatens to take his business elsewhere. The International Civil Aviation Organisation of which South Africa is a member says “It is the shipper’s responsibility to ensure that all the applicable air transport regulations are adhered to.”



“This was an eye-opener. Very useful”.

Jone Figueira – takealot



“Important messages to take back. This awareness must go right down the line.”

Mark Lewis – ACT Logistics



“Very informative –the lithium batteries session especially”

Sasha-Lee Juter



“We need to push this message throughout the supply chain.”

Theuns Dreyer – Comair Ramp Manager, Cape Town

“Everyone who deals with aircargo in any capacity – or has access to an aircargo warehouse – has the responsibility to be aware of and compliant with DGA regulations”

David Alexander, General Manager, Professional Aviation Services

Lithium-ion batteries

The section dealing with lithium-ion batteries attracted keen attention in view of the topicality of the subject and the somewhat confusing treatment in the press. Their use in electronic products ranging from watches to calculators, cameras and video, laptops, mobile phones, speakers, power drills, drones, bikes, wheelchairs and other devices, means that billions are shipped annually. As they may become unstable when subject to temperature fluctuations, pressure, vibration or damage, only batteries packed in or with equipment are permitted on passenger flights. Batteries shipped in bulk are confined to cargo flights. Careful handling is critical to avoid risk.

In conclusion, Wayne Davids, Cape Regional Manager of BidAir Cargo thanked delegates for attending. “Taking time off in our industry- even for critical training – is seldom easy.” It isn’t possible to cover every eventuality in one session so each delegate was given a password equipping them to log-on to an internet-based awareness program. “Any employee who has trouble understanding or following technical instructions should seek professional guidance. You are welcome to contact BidAir Cargo or Professional Aviation Services.”

Further workshops are possible, depending on demand.



Wayne (left) and David stressed the necessity of making every employee aware of their DG responsibilities
 “BidAir Cargo and our partners are always available to guide clients” Wayne promises.



PETLOUNGE FOR GEORGE AIRPORT

George Airport is to gain its own PetLounge from 1 July. BidAir Cargo is expanding and investing in converting one of its offices to accommodate animals arriving and departing.

The new facility is opening in response to growing numbers of animals travelling to and from the Garden Route gateway on partner airlines kulula.com and British Airways.

“Families no longer have to postpone their break because they can’t bear to be parted from a loved pet, can’t find a pet sitter or can’t find suitable accommodation,” says Wayne Davids, BidAir Cargo Cape Regional Manager. “They deliver their pet to animal specialists in air-conditioned stress-free surroundings in Johannesburg, away from the hustle and bustle of cargo and airport operations. The pets are looked after, secure in their travel containers. They



Wayne Davids and Marthinus Wagman

63,2%
of Americans
consider pets
to be family
members

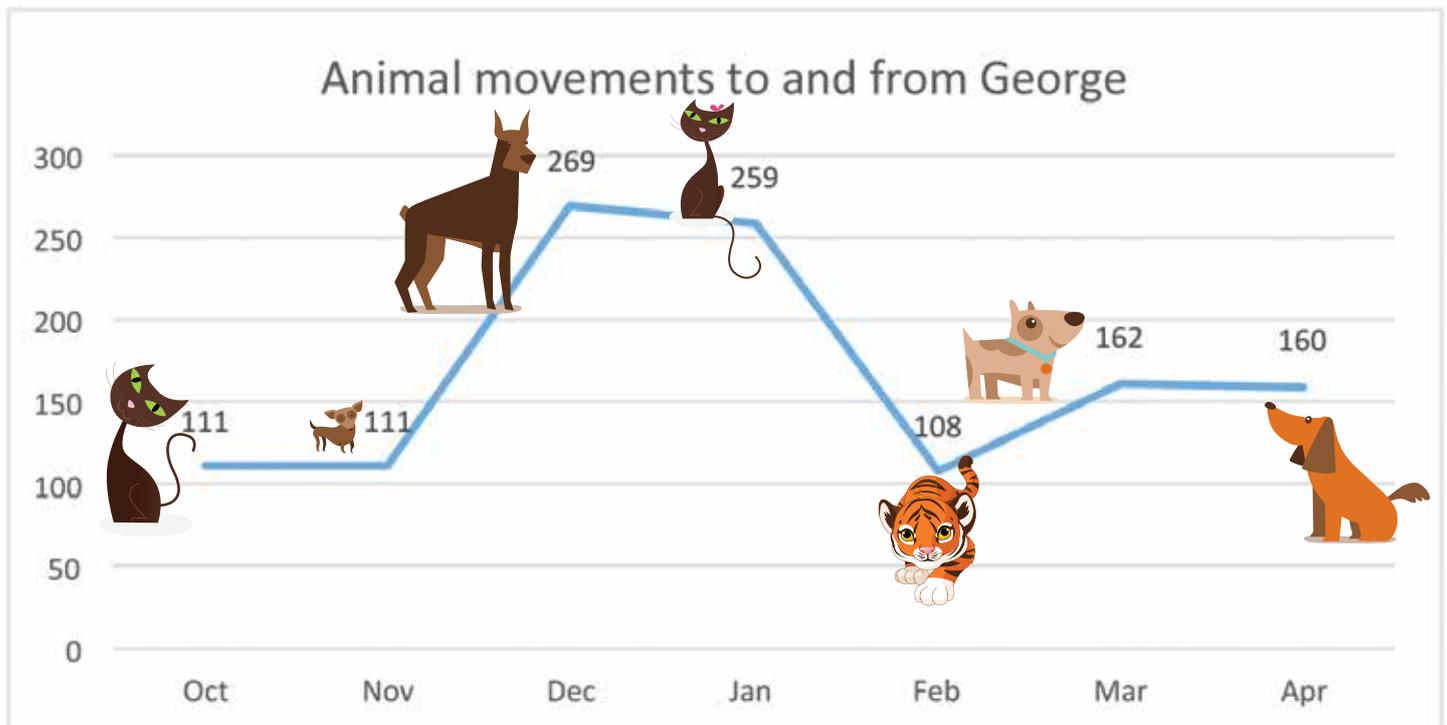
are then escorted safely aboard the aircraft to await their reunion in the new, comfortable and tranquil facility at George Airport.”

The high fees for leaving pets in kennels, the trauma of separation for all concerned and the pet being confined to a small space makes the PetLounge a more economical and family-friendly option.

BidAir Cargo’s George Station

Manager, Marthinus Wagman, is refreshing his specialist animal travel skills in anticipation of stepped-up arrivals and departures.

The facility is also suitable for other unaccompanied animals such as those travelling from breeders to new homes elsewhere in South Africa. It will also provide a service for fish and birds where utmost care is essential in maintaining optimum temperatures.



There have been 1069 animal shipments to and from George in the six months November to April. December was the peak month with 269, of which 216 were arrivals, more than 65% on the same flight as their owners.

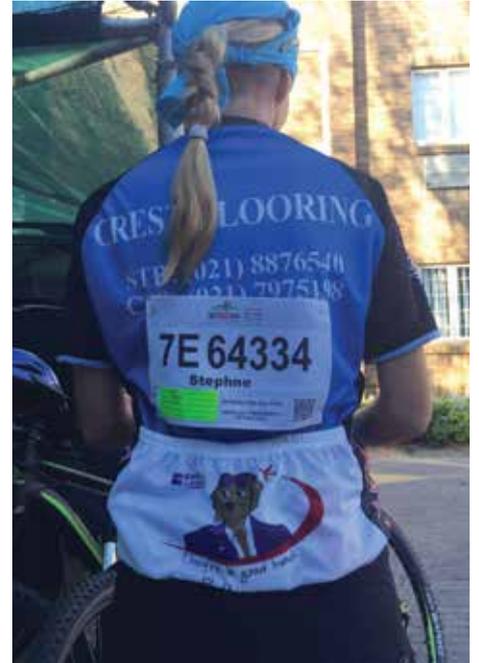
“Families no longer have to postpone their break because they can’t bear to be parted from a loved pet, can’t find a pet sitter or can’t find suitable accommodation”

Wayne Davids, BidAir Cargo Cape Regional Manager.



The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated.

Mahatma Gandhi



In support of our four-legged friends

Team Watershed prominently displayed BidAir Cargo logos during the recent Cape Cycle Tour of which they are a beneficiary. Their participation increases public awareness of the ongoing fine work the animal rescue and rehabilitation fund carries out, especially in the poorest areas. It also helps generate sponsorships for emergency medical care or food for those rescue centres in desperate need.

Watershed is dependent on the hard work and devotion of unpaid volunteers. From time to time, BidAir Cargo helps transport animals in need to places of safety. Our support for the organisation is in line with our Group's commitment to playing a role in the communities in which we operate.

To learn more about Watershed or to help, go to www.watershed.org.za



VICTORIA FALLS

fastjet's first flight between Johannesburg and Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe took to the skies on March 25 2016, marking an important milestone in the pan-African airline's growth plans.

The flight was fastjet's first international route from Victoria Falls and was launched in response to strong passenger and tour operator demand from within the South African market. fastjet has been engaging with South African tour operators to deliver inclusive packages to encourage more South African visitors to fly to Victoria Falls.

Services between OR Tambo International Airport and Victoria Falls International Airport now operate twice a week on Fridays and Sundays.

TRADE MISSION – TANZANIA

The Department of Trade and Industry is hosting a Trade and Investment Mission to Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania from 28 – 30 June 2016. The objective is to increase mutual trade and investment.

The target sectors include agro-processing, infrastructure (rail, road and telecoms), mining and capital equipment; ICT and electro-technical, chemicals, plastics, pharmaceuticals and energy as well as professional services.

With the largest population in East Africa and impressive GDP growth of 6-7% per annum over the last decade, Tanzania has become an important regional hub and key trading partner.

With our partner airline, fastjet, BidAir Cargo offers a range of cargo services to, from and around Tanzania and the region.

Quotations – Bookings – Flight Schedules – Routings – Tracking Requests – Rates – Collections – Deliveries
– Chartering – Broking – Cooler Chain – Warehousing – Distribution – Permits – Insurance – Directions

Serving Clients

The Customer Service Department (CSD) exists to serve Clients, before, during and after a shipment. Because express consignments are urgent, there are time pressures and reassurance is a precious commodity. CSD staff have to have in-depth knowledge of operations and costings and people-management skills to deal with queries face-to-face, over the phone or on email. With the opening-up of new cargo routes and destinations in Africa, keeping up with all the options is especially demanding.

Maria Jiyane, Customer Services Manager



Maria finds it fascinating to deal with local and international couriers and freight companies, airlines, suppliers, transporters and private clients. "That's front-line contact with people from all walks of life with varied business processes and different cultures."

Since Clients like the one-stop shop approach so CSD tries to say "yes" to whatever clients ask - assistance with permits such as health, agriculture, veterinary authorizations, Dept. of Commerce and Industry etc.

CSD's first care is to understand the nature of each request and gather sufficient information to provide the correct response. Sometimes it's necessary to seek additional information from partners locally, regionally or overseas. "We take care to keep clients in the picture so they don't think we've forgotten them. It's also vital to know when we need to involve management in complex situations."

Internationally, CSD receives requests for rates for import and export. "It's not always commercial goods as we are

often asked to move excess baggage. Not only that but clients often request to pay in foreign currency such as dollars, pounds and euros."

A further key responsibility is to provide meaningful feedback to operations, sales, accounts, administration and management to give them the data they need to keep processes working efficiently.

Portia Solomons Consultant

Apart from the customary questions about safety and security, she recalls some humorous interactions. "How can I make my cat keep still while I measure it with a ruler?" and "Does the airline put pets with the suitcases? and "Can you organise a chair for me so I can sit with my cat in the cargo hold?"

As our business is about time-pressure, clients naturally become stressed, more so when their precious pets are concerned. "We have to remain unruffled and professional as this is the best recipe for calming the client so that the strain doesn't rub off on the animals."

Refiloe Kodisang - Reservations

Dealing with cash clients, regular clients and members of the public means every day brings new contacts but it isn't just the clients who are varied. Schedules, destinations, processes, regulations and tariffs are also subject to change.



"In this high-speed, fast-changing business environment, we have to update files and ensure our system is up to date with current information so clients receive accurate and timely information."

Like Portia, Refiloe mentions great satisfaction in dealing with the owners of animals using the PetLounge and has also been faced with amusing requests such "Do the dogs have stewards looking after them like in the passenger cabin?" and "May I have a photograph of my cat in the cargo hold?"

Lindi Sono Consultant

Lindi Sono enjoys the variety of clients and the services they need. "We talk to people about domestic, regional & animal movements. The key is to source accurate information and respond appropriately to their attitude to achieve mutual satisfaction."

Conclusion

Everyone in CSD shares the major satisfaction of knowing that they have assisted clients and the feeling of fulfilment that comes with a job well-done.

"We take care to keep clients in the picture so they don't think we've forgotten them. It's also vital to know when we need to involve management in complex situations."

Maria Jiyane