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FINAL CALL

International Airport Review speaks to Mike Moore of surface clearing specialist Aebi Schmidt, about the increasing importance airports are placing on their winter operations.

How closely do you work with airports to select the correct product(s) for their operations?

Very closely – as well as working towards cementing a good personal relationship with the airport staff and most importantly gaining their trust, it is also crucial to understand their operations. For example in a snow clearing plan, you need to identify what equipment is already in situ and how it came to be there, the layout of the airfield, the climatic conditions and ultimately the airport's aspirations/objectives of the equipment. At Aebi Schmidt, we pride ourselves on being able to provide a consultative approach.

How important is it for an airport to select the correct product(s)?

It's crucial. The design, construction, life span and price of this equipment means that once purchased, it would be very costly to modify it to suit if it's not right on day one. More importantly, due to the financial penalties associated with the airfield not being open, the airport has to have the most productive, efficient and reliable machines available. On-going customer service is also very important to the airport.

What are the most important aspects of an airport's de-icing equipment?

In my opinion it's the control system and the construction of the machine. De-icing material is very expensive and is considered by some to be not so environmentally friendly. Therefore a

machine which works accurately at all speeds (road speed related), reliably in all adverse weather conditions and is able to withstand the forces generated by repeated turning and braking actions is vital to this critical action.

In terms of sweeping, are there any advantages to using a 'detachable' as opposed to a 'mounted' sweeper?

Only that the truck chassis under the sweeper gets better utilised. However, there are guidelines in place that airports have to adhere to regarding Foreign Object Debris (FOD) and there is no better way of combating this than by using a purpose-built runway sweeper, for example the Schmidt AS 990. It's important to remember that wherever there are people, luggage, vehicles and aircraft, FOD is inevitable.

What do airports expect from snow ploughs when clearing runways and aprons?

When airports use a snowplough that is designed and constructed for use on an aerodrome they would/should expect it to remove 90-95 per cent of the snow, leaving only five per cent for the jet sweeper part to remove, ready for the de-icers.

How effective can jet sweepers be in clearing those runways and aprons?

With a good quality snowplough mounted at the front, a correctly set-up sweeper and a powerful efficient blower, there is no better piece of equipment to carry out this task.



Has the airport industry's attitude to winter operations changed over the past couple of years?

The winter of 2009/10 was almost certainly a tipping point. That winter focused people's minds on the importance of a robust snow clearing plan, having the right equipment available and ensuring staff are fully trained for all scenarios.

Biography

Mike Moore joined Aebi Schmidt in February 2000. He has held various roles within the group over the years, including a two-year spell in Germany within the Holding part of the Aebi Schmidt Organisation, working as a Product Manager for Sweepers. Mike project managed several key orders for organisations such as the Ministry of Defence, Highways Agency larger airports and Balfour Beatty. In January 2011, Mike took on responsibility for all UK civilian airports and major contractors.