

Airport and ground operations

Choose a role and understand local training boundaries

Airport and ground operations is a family of jobs rather than one universal qualification. It includes passenger and baggage services, cargo, aircraft servicing and airport coordination. Some work takes place in a terminal; some is in restricted operational areas. Start by identifying the task, employer and location. This guide helps you ask about the training and authorization relevant to that specific role.

Educational reference. Sources checked 27 October 2026. Verify current requirements with the relevant authority and employer.

What the work contributes

- Help passengers, baggage, cargo and information move between the right teams, supporting an orderly airport operation.
- Support safe aircraft turnarounds through coordinated specialist work, while recognising that individual duties depend on training and authorisation.
- Notice and report concerns, communicate delays accurately and protect the quality of handovers rather than trading safety for speed.

An illustrative working day

Original simplified example, not a duty schedule or an operating procedure. Actual work varies by organization, operation and assigned role.

Part of the work	What a beginner should notice
Team briefing	A new colleague confirms the assignment, supervisor, permitted activities and any learning objectives.
Assigned support	Work takes place alongside trained colleagues. Being present airside does not by itself authorize driving or specialist equipment use.
A changed plan	A delay or unexpected finding is reported. The team clarifies responsibility rather than improvising around unfamiliar hazards.
End of assignment	Relevant information is recorded and questions are discussed. Passenger-service, baggage and airport-operations teams can have different daily patterns.

Keep the role boundaries clear

The airport operator, an airline and a ground-handling contractor may employ different teams at the same location. Airport planning, security screening, aircraft maintenance and ground handling are not interchangeable careers. A general course is not an access pass or permission to drive or use equipment.

Which branch interests you most and what task would you like to understand better

Build your learning sequence

Use this sequence to investigate the career before committing to formal training. It is an educational exploration path, not an approved syllabus or a compulsory worldwide route.

1 Choose a branch of airport work

Select an initial branch: passenger-facing work, baggage or cargo, aircraft servicing, or airport coordination. Read actual vacancies and distinguish an airport employer from an airline or ground-handling contractor.

2 Build dependable work habits

Build useful foundations in communication, punctuality, basic numeracy and following written information. Prepare examples showing how you spotted an error, asked for help or coordinated with a team.

3 Ask who provides local training

Ask the prospective employer about local induction, access arrangements and task-specific training. Identify who provides each element and whether it occurs before recruitment, after selection or under supervision.

4 Separate access from task permission

Treat driving and specialist equipment as separate competence questions. A public-road driving licence or general aviation course should not be assumed to confer permission to operate at an airport.

5 Understand progression before assuming it

Complete the required employer and airport learning pathway, keep records and confirm task limits. Discuss further roles only after understanding the additional training, assessment or authorisation they involve.

A worked exploration decision

Fictional example: Leila is interested in working at an airport but has only searched for airport jobs. Leila compares passenger service, baggage handling and an airport-operations role. The duties and employers differ, so Leila asks about the specific location, training and work pattern before choosing a course. Interest in the airport environment becomes a more focused decision.

Try a small learning task

Sketch a fictional passenger or baggage journey through an airport using broad stages only. Mark where two organizations exchange information. Identify one question about that handover without drawing a real restricted-area route or prescribing equipment procedures.

My question or learning task and what I will produce

Separate routes from requirements

Country examples illustrate different systems. They do not establish equivalence, transferability or your eligibility. Check the current authority, course and employer requirements for the exact role before acting.

United States example

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) • Airport certification and duty scope

At airports subject to Part 139, section 139.329 requires the airport certificate holder to control pedestrian and ground-vehicle access to movement and safety areas and ensure relevant procedural training before those duties and recurrently. [G1]

United Kingdom example

UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) • Airside-driving scope and proposed ground rules

CAA CAP 790 addresses airside-driving authorization and training under an aerodrome permit scheme, with a stated aerodrome scope. It is not a qualification for every airport occupation. Separately, the CAA ground-handling page still describes a developing regulatory framework; a proposal should not be presented as an already operative general licensing scheme. [G3, G4]

Three labels to use when you compare options

Category	How to interpret the information
Regulated and local controls	US Part 139 duties and UK airside-driving schemes have defined scopes. Check the airport, area, activity and local authorization. The UK ground-handling page describes a developing proposal, not a new universal individual licence. [G1, G3, G4]
Employer conditions	Recruitment preferences are separate from airport access and task-training controls. Ask about the particular site, equipment, vehicle and role, including any support or adjustments.
Typical preparation	Teamwork, clear communication and attention to information are useful foundations. They are not access credentials or permission to drive, service aircraft or operate equipment.

Ask the question that changes the decision

Ask who arranges the site's induction, access checks, task training and any required vehicle or equipment authorization. What must be completed before each activity, and what is learned under supervision? Do not assume another airport's rules or a public-road driving licence supplies the answer.

My intended country and the authority or employer I will verify with

Medical, age, experience, security and work-permission questions belong with the competent authority or responsible organization. Do not use this guide to decide personal eligibility or share private records.

Plan your next step

Take one manageable action, keep its source and date, and leave unanswered questions visible. None of these exercises grants a licence, qualification, operational authority or job entitlement.

- 1 Choose one branch and distinguish the airport operator from airline and contractor employers.
- 2 Read a current role description and ask about the actual location, duties, work pattern and available learning support.
- 3 Verify who arranges induction, access and task-specific training and what evidence or costs are involved.
- 4 Map one educational handover and record the communication skill or source question you will investigate next.

The most important question I still need answered

My next action and review date

Official sources and scope

All links below were checked at the stated scope on 27 October 2026. Requirements can change. These organizations do not endorse Avi Learner or this guide.

[\[G1\] FAA regulations via eCFR 14 CFR 139.329 - Pedestrians and ground vehicles](#)

Airport access procedures and initial/recurrent training for specified areas and duties.

[\[G2\] FAA AC 150/5210-20A - Ground Vehicle Operations](#)

Airport-specific training guidance; general use is not mandatory.

[\[G3\] UK CAA Ground handling](#)

Breadth of ground-handling activities and proposed regulatory framework.

[\[G4\] UK CAA CAP 790 - Requirement for an Airside Driving Permit Scheme](#)

Defined scheme scope and airport driving authorisation/training distinctions.

Explore related Avi Learner pages

[Airports and ground operations](#)

[Ramp coordinator role profile](#)

[Training provider checklist](#)

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