LEONARDO TO BOOST AIRPORT OPERATIONS IN USA WITH TWO MAJOR BAGGAGE HANDLING SYSTEM CONTRACTS

News / Airports / Routes, Manufacturer

Leonardo is growing its support to airport operations in USA with two major contracts for baggage handling system solutions recently signed for the Houston Hobby Airport (HOU) and the Melbourne Orlando International Airport (MLB) for the combined contract value of more than 120 million USD. Through these programmes, Leonardo will modernize and streamline baggage operations without interrupting the airports' daily activities and help them meeting the evolving traffic demand in 2026.

Passengers will benefit from faster, more secure and more reliable baggage processing, while airports' stakeholders gain improved operational efficiency, reduced maintenance costs, and enhanced system management, for both daily national and international activities. Also, Leonardo maintains a strong commitment to sustainability, and both projects align with these values. The systems' design ensure reduced energy consumption, lower maintenance needs, and more efficient resource use. By optimizing operational performance, the upgrades contribute positively to the airports' sustainability goals, helping mitigate environmental impact while supporting long-

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term infrastructure efficiency.

Leonardo will carry out a full-scale upgrade of the Baggage Handling System at Houston Hobby Airport (HOU). This comprehensive project will completely replace the airport's existing BHS infrastructure, ushering in a new era of efficiency, capacity and reliability. The new BHS includes two high-performance Cross-Belt sorters: a 780-foot Cross-Belt sorter integrated into the TSA-compliant Checked Baggage Inspection System, and a 673-foot bag make-up sorter responsible for routing outbound and transfer bags to their respective flights. Together, these machines form the core of a streamlined baggage flow designed to handle event-level passenger volumes with ease. The system also includes an Early Bag Storage solution, allowing secure storage of transfer bags for longer layovers and early check-in passengers.

To further enhance efficiency, a Bag Aligner will be installed to optimize bag presentation ahead of the Explosive Detection System scanners—helping reduce bag jams and improve overall system reliability. Supporting the sorters is an extensive conveyor network, with 1,310 feet of inbound conveyors and an outbound system stretching over 1.3 miles. Manual Encoding Stations will allow staff to manually scan and route any bags requiring additional handling, while multiple sorting chutes and newly constructed steel mezzanines and platforms will improve capacity and organization on the ground. To power and manage the system, Leonardo is providing a fully integrated software package that includes Sorting Allocation Controller and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition. This technology delivers a real-time view of baggage operations, tracks every bag and system component, sends alerts for any issues, and stores operational data for long-term performance optimization and predictive maintenance.

At the core of the Melbourne Orlando International Airport – MLB's upgrade is a 100% TSA-approved Checked Baggage Inspection System using a Cross-Belt sorter. The system is designed to enhance tracking, reduce errors, and deliver more efficient baggage operations—all within a smaller, compact footprint. The key components of the new BHS include a 524-foot Cross-Belt sorter supported by five induction lines and thirteen linear sorting chutes to efficiently manage baggage flow. Additionally, three Explosive Detection System screening machines will be integrated to ensure compliance with TSA security standards. An Automatic Tag Reader will enable real-time luggage identification and tracking.

The upgrade also features a dedicated system for oversized baggage and an integrated Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition platform for real-time monitoring and diagnostics. By adopting Leonardo's Cross-Belt sorter over a conventional BHS system, the airport reduced construction costs by approximately 16% and shortened the project timeline by six months. The system's compact footprint enables full installation within the existing terminal, avoiding costly apron modifications and improving overall space efficiency.

These projects are also a strategic step for Leonardo, reinforcing its growing presence in USA alongside notable installations such as the BHS at Denver International Airport and the MSC Cruises terminal in Miami. These projects add to Leonardo's global portfolio across Europe, Asia, Middle East and India. With them, Leonardo continues its commitment to delivering efficient and reliable automation solutions tailored to airports and transportation hubs.

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