

MEDIA RELEASE

MORE CHILDREN FLYING ALONE FROM SWISS AIRPORTS

A growing number of children are navigating Swiss airports alone, reflecting a shift in modern travel patterns driven by globalized families and changing work dynamics. As the largest provider of passenger services in Switzerland, Swissport ensures that they are carefully looked after from check-in to boarding.

Swissport International, the global leader in aviation ground services and the largest provider of passenger services at airports in Switzerland, is seeing a growing number of unaccompanied children departing from or arriving in Switzerland. These so-called unaccompanied minors ("UM"), as they are referred to in aviation terminology, are children aged 5 to 12 who travel alone by air. Swissport, in close cooperation with airlines, ensures that unaccompanied minors receive dedicated supervision, making their airport experience safe and stress-free – and providing their parents or guardians with peace of mind until they are reunited.

The demand for UM services in Switzerland has grown significantly. At Zurich Airport alone, Swissport assisted almost 12,000 young solo travellers last year, reflecting a four percent rise compared to the previous year. The busiest periods were the summer and Christmas travel seasons, with a record 192 unaccompanied minors assisted on a single day on 7 July 2024. A similar trend is visible at other airports: At Geneva Airport, Swissport supported more than 12,500 UM, slightly more than four percent increase year-on-year. At Basel EuroAirport, over 900 UM were assisted, marking a three percent rise.

COMPREHENSIVE CARE FOR YOUNG TRAVELERS

Children traveling alone receive dedicated support from Swissport staff throughout their entire journey at the airport. This includes handover to ground staff by their guardian at check-in, assistance through security checks to the gate, and the transfer to the accompanying flight attendant. Upon arrival, trained ground staff welcome the children, guide them through immigration and customs, and ensure a safe handover to the authorized recipient.

"With international mobility increasing, especially in cities with diverse, global workforces like Zurich, Basel, and Geneva, more children are flying alone to visit family members who live far apart. Ensuring their well-being and safety on the ground has always been a top priority for Swissport and its airline partners," says Andreas Keller, Managing Director Switzerland & France.

As air travel continues to rise, Swissport remains committed to enhancing its unaccompanied minor services to ensure that every child traveling alone has a safe and seamless journey.

TIPS FOR A SMOOTH JOURNEY FOR UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

To ensure a seamless travel experience for unaccompanied minors, guardians are encouraged to follow these key guidelines:

- Have all necessary documents ready – Ensure the child has identification documents, consent forms, and the contact details of the authorized recipient at the destination.
- Prepare the child for the journey – Explain airport procedures and who will be picking them up to prevent any uncertainty.
- Book early – Reserve the UM service with the airline in advance to ensure smooth arrangements.

In 2024, Swissport International AG provided best-in-class airport ground services for some 247 million airline passengers (2023: 232 million) and handled roughly 5.0 million tons of air freight (2023: 4.7 million) at 117 cargo centers. Several of its warehouses have been certified for pharmaceutical logistics by IATA's CEIV Pharma and by the British MHRA. At the end of December 2024, the world's leader in airport ground services and air cargo handling, with currently around 61,000 employees, was active at 279 airports in 45 countries on six continents.

Media contacts

Swissport International AG, Group Communications, Nathalie Berchtold, P.O. Box, 8058 Zurich Airport, Switzerland
media@swissport.com, +41 43 815 00 22