

IATA accolade for Singapore cold chain service

13 February 2014 | Analysis | By BioSpectrum Bureau



Singapore: Singapore's air freight handling facility for perishable items, SATS Coolport, is certified as a Center of Excellence in Pharmaceutical Handling by the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

SATS set up its pharmaceutical handling center to cater to the high growth in pharmaceutical air freight. In 2013, SATS Coolport handled more than 15,200 tonnes of pharmaceuticals. The IATA certification will give pharmaceutical companies the guarantee of excellence in service and ease in conducting audits on SATS Coolport; and in turn, Singapore's Changi airport will become an even more attractive pharmaceutical air freight hub.

The certification process, which took three months to complete, encompassed some upgrading of the facility including enhancements to Coolport's dedicated pharmaceutical zone for both acceptance and delivery of pharmaceutical shipments. This ensures that the facility adheres to the good distribution practice guidelines for pharmaceutical handling.

IATA also assessed SATS Coolport's procedures and policies for pharmaceutical handling against national and international standards, in particular adherence to the IATA Temperature Control Regulations, and best practices.

Over 80 SATS employees working at the facility are undergoing a specialized training programme for pharmaceutical handling conducted by IATA. Upon passing their examinations at the end of the programme, which can take up to 12 months, the staff will receive a Diploma in Pharmaceutical Handling from IATA. The first batch of trainees is expected to graduate in October this year.

Mr Alex Hungate, president and CEO, SATS said, "As a leader in gateway services, we are constantly driving innovation and service improvements. The development of SATS Coolport as the first Center of Excellence in Pharmaceutical Handling will give our airline customers and global shippers further assurance that their pharmaceutical shipments are handled to the most exacting standards."

He added, "With this milestone and the growing demand for end-to-end, assured handling of high value pharmaceutical products, SATS will look at extending our state-of-the-art cold chain capabilities to our other operations across Asia."

"As we celebrate 100 years of commercial aviation, we are reminded of the value that our industry brings. Aviation is a global partner of the pharmaceutical industry in ensuring critical medicines reach patients in a timely manner at a constant temperature, preserving their integrity. The shipping of pharmaceutical products is the fastest growing market segment in the air freight industry. I congratulate SATS Coolport in their successful completion of the assessment as a Centre of Excellence in Pharmaceutical Handling," said Mr Tony Tyler, director general and CEO, IATA.

Mr Yap Ong Heng, director general, Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS), said that, "SATS Coolport's certification as the world's first Center of Excellence in Pharmaceutical Handling reinforces a niche of excellence that will strengthen the Singapore aviation hub and the air cargo and logistics sector here. This achievement will certainly enhance Changi Airport and Singapore's position as a choice location for pharmaceutical air freight. CAAS is pleased to support the SATS collaboration with IATA in building this novel, distinctive capability through our Aviation Innovation Programme."