

Bay Area Airports Alert

Improving Safety, Security and Service Standards at Airports Across the Bay Area

Prospect Workers Win Contract at SFO 2008 to See Massive Statewide Campaign to Raise Standards for Passengers and Airline Service Workers

SAN FRANCISCO – After more than 14 months of negotiations, workers with Prospect Airport Services reached a tentative agreement with their employer on their first union contract. The three-year pact, if ratified by the workers, will raise wages and benefits for 70 Prospect workers subcontracted by the airlines to provide assistance to air travelers with disabilities at San Francisco International Airport in the International Terminal.

The new contract has the most comprehensive language to date to ensure that workers are able to properly serve passengers with disabilities – an important step forward for the growing coalition between airport workers and disability rights advocates.

“This agreement will improve passenger safety as well as our wages and benefits,” said Maria Luisa Sarte, a member of the bargaining committee and passenger service worker for nearly 7 years. Under the contract, Prospect workers will receive an increase in their wages as well as healthcare benefits and paid time off. In addition, the new contract will give workers more strength to bring the company into compliance with airport policies around passenger safety.

Last year, several Prospect workers blew the whistle on the company for forcing workers to use broken wheelchairs and to push more than one wheelchair at a time, practices that put air travelers with disabilities at risk. Workers testified at an Airport Commission meeting and later filed a formal complaint with the Department of Transportation against their employer for alleged failure to provide adequate training and properly maintain equipment, in violation of the Air Carrier Access Act.

The tentative deal was reached late Thursday night after proactive mediation by the San Francisco Airport Administration as well as the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services. Airport Director John Martin and his staff were instrumental in resolving the on-going labor dispute and in avoiding a strike at SFO.

Prospect workers’ victory marks the kick-off of efforts by airport workers in the State to raise industry standards. This summer, more than 6,000 service workers in California’s airports will be fighting for union contracts with family **healthcare, living wages, and improved working conditions.**

LAX Moves Forward on New Policy to Improve Public Safety and Service Quality

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), the city agency that operates Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), is close to finalizing a new policy to improve and monitor training requirements and quality of jobs and services provided by LAX passenger service contractors.

According to Gina Marie Lindsey, executive director of LAWA, the new policy would set “standards for passenger service contractors that create accountable performance” around training, staffing, equipment, and security. Such standards, stated Ms. Lindsey, could result in the “reduction of employee turnover, an improvement in the passenger service experience and more uniform security vigilance.”

The standards would involve an evaluation of potential contractors based on employee relations, employee training, contractor experience and history, and service quality. The new policy would also create stronger mechanisms for monitoring and enforcements.

The Board of Airport Commissioners is expected to approve the new policy in February.



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