

The Unofficial Strategy Guide for Airport Tycoon (aka Air Mogul) (aka Airport, Inc.) V1.06 – 11/27/02 – Mitchell J. Hein

General Review:

I've seen this game slammed in a number of reviews, and while in some cases their gripes are justified, I've found most of the gameplay problems can be worked around. There are a few annoying bugs, but the single biggest problem with the game is the lack of good help and tutorials. Bad things happen to you, and you have no idea what to do about it. That's where this strategy guide comes in. Overall, I like this game. It's as addictive and riveting as any other sim out there. I do have an extensive wish list for this game, but since I can't do anything about that, I'll keep it to myself.

General Notes and Tips:

Becoming Number One

The Ranking System is heavily weighted toward Customer Satisfaction. You could post a loss of millions of dollars, and so long as your customers are wildly happy, you are ranked in the top ten. Conversely, you could post a profit of hundreds of millions of dollars, have the most passengers, throughput, and contracts, yet if your Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) is even at zero (which is neither happy nor unhappy), you'll be ranked in the middle of the bunch. So what? If money makes you happy, then ignore the CSI... however, the higher the CSI, the more return customers you get.

Security and Customer Satisfaction

If you really want to become the number one airline, you need to win awards... lots of them. For that you need lots of security to prevent bombings and threats. Those events really hurt your popularity, however, you can prevent them. When you start out, you need at least two police stations... They must be right next to the terminal. I like one at each end of the terminal to start. They're cheap and have great benefit. Use Properties to change all of them to Cautious. The heightened security all but eliminates Bomb Threats, thereby improving Customer Satisfaction. In addition, the security awards you win (after about a year) will really send your customer satisfaction index over the top. Then the contracts pour in, and life is grand.

Getting Contracts

Early on, accept EVERY contract without negotiation. You have no bargaining power, since they're one of the only bidders. They may even offer less the second time if you try to negotiate without any leverage. They know they have you at a disadvantage. See... this isn't a bug, it's a realistic feature. Once your retail area fills up, and the renewals start to come in, THEN start sending low price contracts back for a re-quote. Remember that rent is only a small amount of cash compared with what you make off the initial amount. Allow low rent, but make them pay a good amount for that Initial Fee. I usually hold out for 75K minimum, and give preference to \$80K and up. I've only seen a retailer shell out more than \$100K once, so don't set your standards too high. They'll tell you that's too much, and cancel their offer. If they cancel out, replace them. By this time, you'll be able to pick and choose from many offers. I also like the smaller single square retailers, and will always reject renewals for the big 2x3 and 2x2 retailers. You make 4 to 6 times the money from the smaller shops. Think of it... the same pay for one quarter the floorspace.

Honoring the Contracts

Once you assign a "dedicated check-in desk" to an airline, they'll never move to a different terminal... even if you want them to! You can de-allocate their desks, and assign new ones in the new terminal, and they will refuse to recognize the new desks. Not only that, but they'll be convinced that you're breaking the contract agreement. You will have to restore (or add) new desks for them in the terminal they originally started in. BEWARE! If you de-select all the dedicated desks from an airline which requires them, you'll offend them... BUT WORSE, the game won't tell you WHICH airline is unhappy. The game will only tell you that "The Airline is Unhappy". You'll have to dig through every one of your Master Contracts and find all their desks to find the one you've angered. Quite a major pain... make sure you only delete desks for one airline at a time.

Administration Buildings

Administration offices not only tell you why you didn't get a contract, but they actually help you out by bringing in more contracts. If contracts aren't being offered to you, either you have no available slots on your runways, not enough plane stands, or you need more admin buildings. If you already have eight or more admin buildings, then you may have hit the maximum contract limit (see FAQ).

Game Controls

The keyboard setup screen doesn't mention it, but you should remember that you can use the 4 and 6 keys on the number pad to rotate your view. You can also use the 8 key to zoom in, and the 2 key to zoom out. What the manual DOESN'T tell you is that these keys have a much greater range than the zoom buttons on the screen. The view rotation also helps in effectively placing objects. If walls disappear when you're placing things, then rotate your view. This greatly helps in accurately placing retailers, buildings, and objects.

Placing your Runways

The lights at the end of your runways interfere with new construction. If you place one end of your runways near the boundary of your land, then you don't have to worry about the lights (at least on that end). Set up your runways so the first set of cross lights are just over the boundary. This allows maximum room for taxiway, road, and track to pass by.

Also, hotels allow themselves to be placed anywhere, but if you put them near the flight path or the terminal entrance, you'll hear whining about it forever, because if the location has enough cars, the hotel will never cancel its contract. Allow at least ten squares of separation from the edge of the runway to avoid hearing about this issue.

Cargo

In order to track how full your cargo buildings are, use color wash to change them yellow, orange or red (based on how full they are). It's not as picturesque, but it really helps you keep track of them. You can also use other colors (purple or green) to denote dedicated use or problems. Once in a while, you may get a "Building Overworked" message. Simply re-assign the building to a different cargo carrier, (one with lots of contracts) and the condition will eventually clear out.

Cargo units eventually fill up, and you have to build more. This is a good thing... you see, the carriers are paying you to STORE stuff, and the more of these you have at 100% full, the more money they pay you for this storage. Each year a cargo building sits full on your property, you make enough to pay for 4 more cargo buildings. The closer they are to your plane stands, the quicker they fill up... but this also clutters up some of the most valuable airport real estate. You don't have to wait for a special contract to add any type of storage buildings. Add them when you get enough cash, and they'll usually pay for themselves inside of 6 months. Only build extra livestock or cold storage when the others are all over 90% or set aside for dedicated use. Building 3 or 4 of these won't fill them up any quicker.

Complainers

Most of what you deal with in this game are complaints. Since there is no easy way to monitor how well your buildings are dealing with the demands being placed on them, you have to wait for the game to tell you that something has gone amiss. You'll be really happy when you land your first hotel or petrol contract... until you realize that all they do is whine at you. Too many guests... not enough guests... and customers who hate waiting for petrol. Of course, you're not able to do ANYTHING to fix many of these problems, because you can't expand or add to your services in this area. Check out the FAQ area for tips on the most frequent complaints you'll confront.

Pruning your Flight Contracts:

At some point in the game, you will be making enough money to be comfortable. After looking at your stats, you will find that all your runway slots are full. This means that a Boeing 747 cannot sign a contract to land its 504 passengers at your airport because a deHavilland Otter has a contract to land its 9 passengers. Click the "Manual Renewal" button, and start reviewing each contract over the course of a year. Start by rejecting the weakest flights (like the deHavilland Otters) while approving the larger flights. Eventually, you'll get longer runways, and you'll start rejecting larger flights, and accepting those 747s. There is a fixed limit on the maximum number of contracts you can sign (400). You want the most passengers and cargo you can possibly get with the flights you have contracted.

Hard Difficulty Mode:

Getting an airport started in Hard Mode is tricky, but it can certainly be done. The main obstacle is that you are cash-poor. In general, it comes down to buying the bare minimum to open, and you are then left with about \$2M to spend, and you still need Cargo, Admin, and Airport Maintenance. You could BARELY afford two of them, but you'll lose about \$1M before the contracts will support you, so which one do you go with?

In this position, you MUST go with the Maintenance. It's a long slow climb to profitability, and as your runway falls apart (under 50%), then the airlines will start blowing tires on the unkempt surface. This makes passengers quite grumpy, and causes the airlines to cancel their contracts. Once they're gone, you won't get any new ones, and you're toast. Admin and Cargo are both essential early on, as they bring in cash and contracts, but neither one will make you enough cash to offset the cost of maintenance on your runway, and you'll go bankrupt. Hard mode is especially tough if you choose a location with few local opportunities. Try starting one up in Lagos, Nigeria, and see what I mean.

One very viable approach is to blow off the passenger terminal, and create a cargo-only airport. (Brilliant!!!) You get to create all three of the key buildings, and the money you make will pay for more cargo buildings. You will need admin after you sign eleven contracts. Eventually (after about 10 cargo buildings), you will be making sufficient profit to save up for a build-it-yourself terminal with all the trimmings. If you left room, you can build your terminal amongst your cargo buildings. (see "The Elegant Gate"). The powers-that-be will shut down your runways as soon as you create a terminal, but as soon as you drop an entrance in front, and add a single square gate area inside of it, you can re-open your airport. THEN, you can expand the terminal, and dress it out. Take your time, and build it right.

Medium Difficulty Mode:

I have read comments from others that you aren't allowed to "place items" in medium mode, but I have never seen this. I have gone with pre-fab terminals, and then expanded them using double level Terminal #1 blocks. I have never seen a case where I couldn't add all the objects available in Hard mode in both easy and medium mode. I never play in easy mode. It is no fun, if you can't design your own terminal shape. (...in my ever-humble opinion.)

Placing Retail Establishments:

There are a couple of ways to do this, but I have a new favorite method. I build a 2 square wide corridor, and paint one side all retail. I then add "pockets" which are one square wide, along the other side. This would normally force every business to be a single square, but the game is weird, and insists that there's not enough room, so you'll never get a single retail contract offer. So, elsewhere in your airport, (on each floor), paint a 3x3 square of retail. The offers will pour in, as everyone wants that ONE square it sees, and all they'll offer you are single square retailers. NEVER place anyone in the 3x3 area. Set them all up to face the aisle in your corridor. You are now making 2 to 6 times the cash for the same space. You never want a pair of competing businesses touching. They'll whine at you about once a minute. It's almost as annoying as the Hotel and Petrol messages. So, don't even consider putting all your car rental places in a special retail block like REAL airports do... oh, well.

Another key problem is accidentally placing a business in the wrong direction and preventing use of other areas. The bug with disappearing walls helps make this a bigger problem. Rotate your view before you place the retailer to insure that the entryway is where you think it is.

Administrative Buildings and Contracts:

If you don't have an administration building, you can get a total of 11 contracts. Each administration building you add, adds to the number of contracts you can sign, up to the maximum limit of 400. The three administration buildings add about 50, 100, and 200 respectively... but this isn't what they are worth. If you blow up an existing one, and you are already at your contract limit, you lose about 150 percent of that building's worth.

Be very careful when blowing up old administration buildings! For fun, I destroyed all of my admin buildings except for two #3s. I was curious to see how many contracts I could maintain with just the two buildings, and I ignored the messages about not enough administration resources being available. Eventually, the game dropped my maximum limit to 324. Once the max limit drops, you will never get those slots back... even if you add a hundred admin buildings.

Flight contracts are the most valuable, in terms of pure cash, but you need to eventually assign them to the bigger planes. Otters and Leer Jets are not going to make you rich. (see the list of planes and their capacities, at the end of this document). Hub contracts are quite desirable in terms of bragging rights, and increasing CSI. Master contracts also bring in a nice bonus, but don't be afraid to prune out the airlines with few stars, and low signup paychecks. Three and four star airlines usually offer \$500,000 or less. Nine and ten star airlines offer upwards of \$2,000,000. After you hit the 400 contract limit, you should start to prune the low end out of the picture.

The next most valuable are the Hotel and Gas contracts. The largest Hotels can bring \$500,000 per year, but remember... a contract to bring in a 747 is more valuable than this. Retail contracts are the least valuable contracts you have. These can eventually be sacrificed, as you start nearing the limit of 400. Large retail stores (2X3 and 2X2) are the worst of the worst. You can try to max out your four runways (96 flights each), so that you hit the magic 384... which is the most flight contracts you can sign. This leaves you only 16 other contracts for retail, hotel, and petrol. I like to keep between 30 and 70 retail shops, as it seems to make customers happier. (about 5-10% higher CSI).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

Why are queues forming at my Check-in desks?

One thing you will quickly notice in this game is that it seems as though you can NEVER have enough check-in desks. In one early case, I gave an airline 45 desks for 3 contracts... and it wasn't enough to stop the messages. I have done an extensive study to figure out why that happened, and still haven't got a handle on how the game calculates the limit. I have, however, gained quite an insight into the topic. Here is a sample of what I have found out...

You must first understand that the messages about "queues forming" and "not enough general check-in desks" seem to relate to your ratio of passengers/cargo per desk efficiency points per day (I call these "pecons"). The trigger point for messages starts out at about 3 pecons, and drops drastically as the game progresses.

Secondly, the game seems to have a bug, in that if you have only one or two passenger flights, but have a number of large cargo-only flights, then the capacities of the cargo planes seem to use up your check-in desks, somehow. In one game, I had only 690 passengers per day, and eighteen desks couldn't keep up with them. Think about that... that is only 38 passengers per desk per day! However, I did have 18 contracts at the time, most of them being cargo-only. Eighteen desks is usually good for about 2500 passengers per day, with no cargo only flights. The problem with this is that there is no easy way to gauge a desk's true usage level. There is an "efficiency" rating, but as we will see, that has nothing to do with usage.

The passenger capacity for a given airplane can be found in the table at the end of this document, but cargo cannot be measured. Once you find out the make of each kind of plane you have, add up all the passenger capacities. The only way to get the total desk efficiency points is to add them all up. If you stay ahead of the game, they will all be at 100%, all the time, so it would be number of desks times 100. Divide the total passenger capacity by the number of efficiency points, and you have your pecon ratio.

Nine full strength desks can usually handle 22 to 25 early contracts (2600-2800 passengers/day). This is about 3 pecons. Something odd happens in 1976, when the trigger level seems to suddenly fall off to between 1.5 and 2.0 pecons. About the time they offer vending machines, you suddenly have to double or even triple your desk assignments to keep them happy. I usually see this between February and May of 1975. After that, it is anyone's guess how many to use. I have one game where I've added 9 to 24 desks every time I've received message, and the messages just keep coming.

The trigger definitely corresponds to the types of aircraft you have contracts with. One desk can handle about twenty Lear Jet 0-24's, or about ten deHavilland Otters, but you need between eight to ten desks for each 747 you add. In my most advanced airport, I had 142 contracts with West Coast Air, and was handling about 70,000 of their passengers per day. I think it would have required between 700 and 900 dedicated check-in desks to keep them happy. At 9 desks per square, that's a lot of terminal space... and that was only for that one airline. If you let your pecon ratio climb above 1.00, then you risk getting queue (or general check-in) messages, which are worse than you might think.

Every time you get one of the queue (or general check-in) messages, the game punishes you by permanently reducing the efficiency on some random number of desks. If you just barely trigger the message, they'll steal about 10-11 efficiency points, total. If you are WAY too low on desks, they'll take much more. Note that the game checks for this in real time, so if you want to add or maintain your desks, slow the game to its minimum speed.

REMEMBER that once a desk loses efficiency, it never re-gains it. This is unfair, since adding desks in real life would lessen demands on the other desks. In addition, re-allocating a desk does not reset its efficiency. So, you add a desk. It gets created as a general check-in desk. Because you probably don't have enough of these either, its efficiency immediately drops to 70-80%. You then assign it to an airline, and they continue to whine that their desks are too busy. Get the picture? Remember that the efficiency number is NOT a representation of how much the desks are being used, but a tally of how many queue messages you've gotten.

If you want to add new desks, you should first slow the game to a crawl. Then, delete all the old inefficient desks for a given airline (or general). Keep the efficient desks. If they were dedicated desks, you must de-allocate them before you can delete them. This is the biggest pain in the game. I've given up on doors to my check-in areas. Customers don't need them, and they waste room. You can fit 9 check-in desks in a single map square. I experimented with Service Desks, but they don't seem to add any benefit. I still add a row or two of these, but only out of superstition. You do need cart holds, or the customers will whine.

It isn't easy to keep up with this. You start running out of room very quickly, so you might ask, "Why bother keeping up with the desks?". Well, there are benefits to adding an over-abundance of check-in desks.

Benefit #1 : Airlines send much larger planes much more frequently.

Benefit #2 : Airlines offer Hub Contracts much earlier.

Benefit #3 : Your Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) will dramatically improve, resulting in more master contracts.

Remember that only certain carriers will offer you Hubs. If you can't assign check-in desks to a company, then they'll never offer you a Hub. It's usually a six or seven star company that demands dedicated check-in desks.

Finding room for so many desks is difficult, as the game prevents you from placing these in traffic paths. Larger rooms have a number of diagonal traffic paths, which render the middle of the room unusable. I like using long single-wide rooms, with no doors. See "The Elegant Gate" later in this document for a reasonable solution.

I can't seem to build enough long-stay carparks. What should I do?

Some folks report that you could cover the map with these, and the game would still tell you that you need more. I believe that the message is the result of a bug, where it wants gravel lots, but asks for long stay parks. To prevent this, add a couple of gravel lots. Two of each seem to last for several years with no complaints. 5 asphalt and 3 gravel lots carried me through to January 2000. DON'T put them end-to-end, as it reduces their effectiveness. Also, ONLY connect a road to one side. Otherwise, the traffic will loop around, and back up... which will trigger a call for more carparks. This is a very common mistake, and adding more carparks won't eliminate this blockage problem.

Adding a terminal didn't stop the overcrowding in Terminal #1. How come?

The game has a tendency to over-use terminal #1. As a result, I normally prefer to ONLY use a single terminal. Either way, Terminal #1 must be the largest of your terminals. This is difficult to handle in Easy Mode, because you can't afford much in the beginning, and you can't expand a pre-fab in Easy mode. I recommend playing in Medium or Hard difficulty. You can expand a pre-fab terminal. Construct (or place) your terminal in such a way that you can expand the check-in area. Again... you can't do this in Easy mode. All prefab terminals can handle very large numbers of passengers per year, but the check-in facilities could easily be doubled or tripled before other areas of the terminal become inadequate.

If you're playing in easy mode, then you need to sacrifice some of your retail space to expand your check-in area. Remember not to make the room one big square. The pedestrian traffic pattern will prevent you from using all your space. Alcoves are good. In general, irregularly shaped rooms work better in this game than they do in real life.

I have runway slots and lots of administrative buildings, but no more new contracts... why?

The game has a maximum limit of 400 overall contracts available. If you have stalled out, and aren't getting messages about needing more administration facilities, then add up your airline, retail, hotel, and gasoline contracts. You should find it will add up to 400. Make sure you have cleared out all the rejected contracts, as these count against the cap, as well. To increase throughput, prune your contracts. (see Notes and Tips).

Another possibility is that you don't have enough plane stands. Open your list of contracts, and click on any existing flight. Click on the runway button at the bottom. You can now look at all of your current runway allocations. If you see that a bunch of the empty slots have red squares in the corners, then you need more plane stands.

I get complaints about unreliable turnaround and refueling. Can I fix the problem?

Nope... at least not completely. Even if you can afford more than one Plane Maintenance building, the game insanely decides that the last one you built is the one it will use to supply every plane stand on your map, so building multiple PM facilities won't help. The stupid little trucks drive all the way across the map, even if there is a building right next door. All you can do is place it as close to the center of your plane stands as possible, and make sure you use the newest type available. Also, select the highest grade service available (most expensive). You won't notice the difference in your cashflow, and it increases your CSI.

Turnaround can be set up as multiple buildings, but make sure you keep the turnarounds connected exclusively on the crosshatch side of the plane stands, to keep them from disturbing the planes on their taxiways. Once again, kick up the service to the most expensive.

See "The Elegant Terminal" section at the end of this document for more insight on the placement of these facilities.

How can I stop the complaints from the Hotels and the Petrol Stations?

You can't.well... I mean, you could cancel all your Hotel and Petrol contracts, but the game would probably complain if you did that, too. These complaints are used to drag your CSI down. That is their designed function, and you can't prevent these messages in any way.

The game tells me I need more... (fill in the blank). Why should I?

Vending machines? Toilet cubicles? Information monitors? ...whatever. For these, just add a few. Add a bunch! It makes your customers happy, and they're usually cheap. This is an easy and inexpensive way to raise your CSI.

My retailers continually gripe about being too close to other shops. How can I solve this?

You have placed two competing businesses too close to each other in your mall. If one of them bails out, then replace them with a different type of business, or turn on manual renewal, and don't renew one of them. You can always get a different type of business to fill the void. The griping hurts your CSI rating.

How do I fix all the congestion with my road traffic?

Nothing congests your roads like intersections and short stay car parks. Generally, make sure your main access road is long and has no intersections. If you make this road intersect with another too soon, the traffic backups will be massive, and your customers will get grumpy. There is no way to control the flow of traffic, so traffic always stops at every intersection. I have found a feature (bug?) which eliminates this problem.

The best method involves setting up your system so that the only intersection on the main road is made right at the edge of the map. The main road in must have no hotels or gas stations along it, and no other roads intersecting it. It should go directly to the right side of your terminal entrance. The left side of the terminal entrance goes out 4 or 5 squares, to a "T" intersection. The left side of the "T" has one square, and then goes into the short stay park. The right side of the "T" goes one square, but then turns and runs parallel to the main road all the way to that road by the map edge. Branch off the map edge road for hotels, petrol, and roads for your long-stay parks (which should also be close to your terminal entrance).

Why do my reports show flights with ZERO passengers?

Don't panic, and cancel these contracts. These flights show up as next to useless in your activity report, but they are actually hauling Cargo, and ARE making money for you. This shows up in the year-end report, as well as your bank account. Don't worry about canceling these flights until later in the game, when you are financially solvent, and can pick and choose your flights.

Why are my pilots complaining about delays due to "second rate aircraft"?

Two possibilities here. First, 747s hate waiting for deHavilland Otters. Prune your contracts to eliminate this condition. You have no business landing an Otter on a 3500 meter runway, anyhow. Second, your taxiway and apron structure may be overloaded with airplanes and service vehicles. You need more taxiway paths... or a better layout. I have more on this in the next tip.

Why do my planes land and then fly away?

One of the biggest questions in the game, and the original reason I wrote this document. The bottom line is that they cannot compute a path from the runway they are on to the plane stand they want to go to. Got that? Yes, I know that there are ten empty plane stands just a few squares away, but they want the one that is all the way across the map. You probably have two separate apron networks, as that seemed more efficient. (Two runways per network, right?) Well, you can't force these planes to the plane stands you intended them to use, so all you can do is add a path between your separate networks, and fume as every plane and truck tries to pile onto this one lane road. Another possibility is that there is a path, but other planes have "claimed" all the paths that are available.

I have been experimenting with using apron for taxiways with great results. I generally pave in 3x3 squares. I use two of these 3x3 chunks side by side for a two lane taxiway. The reason this works so much better than the standard 5x5 taxiway chunk, is that it can allow two planes to pass each other.

It seems that when each plane plans on moving, it "draws" a path from where it is to where it wants to go. If the path is available, it will start on its way. If the "chunk" in front of it is occupied, it will wait. The problem with the conventional 5x5 taxiway system is that you have only a single path for two way traffic. Your system will become overloaded if two planes need the same taxiway. Once a third plane shows up, it will turnaround, and leave, rather than wait on the runway. I have had ten planes and many support vehicles moving all at once, using the two-lane 3x3 method, with no flyaways. In high traffic areas (near turnaround or plane maintain buildings), I pave in 1x3 chunks, which allow service vehicles better access and more available routes. You don't want to pave in 1x1 squares, as you have a limited number of "objects" which you can create (1000). You will reach your limit quickly, and gain no real benefit.

Not only do planes like the apron just as well as taxiway, but it's cheaper. It is only \$100 per square, rather than \$250. The only problem is that the game REQUIRES taxiway to open your airport. You could simply use taxiway for a single 3x3 square somewhere in the middle of your system. This satisfies the game's requirements. However, there is a reason to use taxiway for certain paths.

If given a choice, planes always prefer runways over taxiways, and taxiways over apron, but they're not too smart about it. If you place a taxiway right along side a runway (so the planes can get out of the way of inbound traffic), they will ignore it, and cruise right along on the runway, sometimes even turning around and taxiing back on the runway! Proper use of Taxiway and Apron can encourage them along certain paths. See "The Elegant Gate" for more discussion on this topic.

To create 3x3 blocks of taxiway, use apron to create a 3X3 hole, and fill it with taxiway. Create one by a plane stand, and then block in the 3X3s side by side.

One other thing that causes pilot delays and plane fly-aways is the fact that service trucks provided by the turnaround (stairs, baggage, and food trucks) and Plane Maintain (Fuel Trucks) need to drive to the Plane Stand. If you ONLY have taxiway connecting to your plane stands, then these vehicles compete with the planes for use of it. I never allow this. I ONLY connect my turnaround to the crosshatched edge of the plane stands. I also connect Plane Maintain and Cargo directly to the crosshatching. This means that the traffic has two separate routes available, and one doesn't interfere with the other. You can also put Police, Fire, Airport Maintain on this "crosshatch network", however, it seems like Airport Maintenance is more effective out by the runways. Is it??

Why do I need more bus stops? I have one every few squares along my roads.

The game may start calling for more bus stops, even though you have lots of them. You probably bought a huge chunk of land, and aren't using most of it. Draw a nice long road, (along one edge is good) and add a few bus stops farther away from your terminal. The whining will cease. You don't need too many, but they must provide coverage to some percentage of your total land.

Why must we wait for a Large Control Tower?:

This is a real shortcoming of the game, and it hurts your performance. There are certain buildings that you could REALLY use (and certainly afford) much earlier in the game, but for whatever twisted reason, they decided to make you wait for them. The one that hurts the worst is the Large Control Tower. I've over-worked a Medium Tower by mid-1974, and the Large Tower isn't available until more than 13 years later! Cargo and Admin are another pitiful pair. Are they telling us that a larger Warehouse or Office can't be developed until 10 years after the game starts? Ridiculous!! Instead, you need 10 buildings of each type to compensate. It wastes space and money. The 3000M runway could be offered about 3 years earlier, too... I mean, they can't figure out how to pave an extra 1000M onto the end of a 2000M runway? Gimme a break... If I wrote the game, I'd have offered all these items with a high price very early on (triple cost?), and then lowered the prices as time went on until they hit their normal price. That's more realistic, and also doesn't limit a successful airport tycoon.

Anyway, you can help to increase your capability here by going into the properties of the Tower, and increasing their vigilance to Cautious. This will cut down on the "overloaded" messages, for a while. Multiple towers do not seem to help. A single medium tower set to cautious will get less "overloaded" messages than four towers set to normal.

What good are the different kinds of Terminals?

If you play on Medium or Hard mode, you'll notice that in the first few years, they offer you many new types of terminal... twelve types in all. Apart from the fact that they look cool, I haven't found a single benefit of using the much more expensive terminal types (numbers 2 through 6). There MUST be a benefit to spending all that extra cash, but it doesn't help my CSI rating, and it doesn't seem to bring in more contracts... I never use single level terminals.

Also, you can't mix and match the single and double level terminals of a given type. If you try to expand a double level terminal using single level blocks, the game will insist that it is a whole new terminal. This will shut down your runways, and disrupt your flights, until you realize your mistake and blow up the new addition. To blow up a terminal, you must demolish by dragging over the whole terminal. I rarely do this... I just keep adding on more and more to terminal #1.

Why can't I place objects where I want them?

This is another big problem with the game. As soon as you create your terminal, you are PREVENTED from placing objects in certain places. This shouldn't be. They should allow the placement, and then re-route the traffic. If you block off all alternate paths, then a message should report that pedestrian traffic is restricted in such-and-such an area. Even the Pedestrian Conveyors cannot be placed in areas where people are walking... (I ask you... does that make sense?), which really defeats their purpose of helping pedestrians move in your airport. Metal Detectors also belong in the line of pedestrian traffic, but you can't place them there. In reality, they should ONLY be allowed in a traffic path.

Another gotcha concerns the placement of doorways. You are not allowed to place a doorway if there is ANYTHING in the squares on either side of it (even if you remove a door, and then try to immediately replace it). It's even more

frustrating when you're told that you can't put a doorway in a wall because <something> is in the way... but the game won't tell you what the offending object is.

Generally, you want to put in all travelators first. Use something like "retail" to enclose a 1X5 box of corridor. You can place two travelators in the box, and then reclaim the area by making it corridor (or whatever) after this. After your travelators are in place, set your areas up. Once the areas are in place, add all the doors you need. If you can't place a door next to another door, blow up the existing door, and place them in the reverse order.

Doesn't this game ever end?

Each game ends on January 1, 2035. You don't get some splashy screen, or special music... all you get is the same screen you see when you quit the game. The only difference is that instead of saying that you threw in the towel, it praises your airport management skills, and says you should consider doing this for a living. Big deal...

What items didn't make it into the final American release?

Sheds (a tribute to Arthur 'Two Sheds' Jackson).
Hand Dryers and Condom Machines in the bathrooms. (really!)
Janitorial Area, complete with an array of cleaning tools.
Garbage Cans (known as Bins, to the Brits).
Duty Free Shops... has anyone ever seen one?
Airport Map Kiosks

What is the most difficult award to win?

The Well Kept Airport award.

How do I win it?

It is all about the placement of areas in your terminal. The lower level must allow entry in the order: Entryway, Check-In, Security, Mall, Gate. Corridor is allowed between any of these. The upper level must be in the order: Entryway, Arrival, Security, Baggage, Gate. You must have check-in on the lower level, and arrival on the upper level. If you don't, you won't get the award. You also need to add more than 20 squares of flower gardens and trees in front of the airport. You will only win this award once (per terminal?). It is issued immediately before the financial report comes out at the end of December.

What is the next most difficult award to win?

The Supersonic Flight award.

How do I win it?

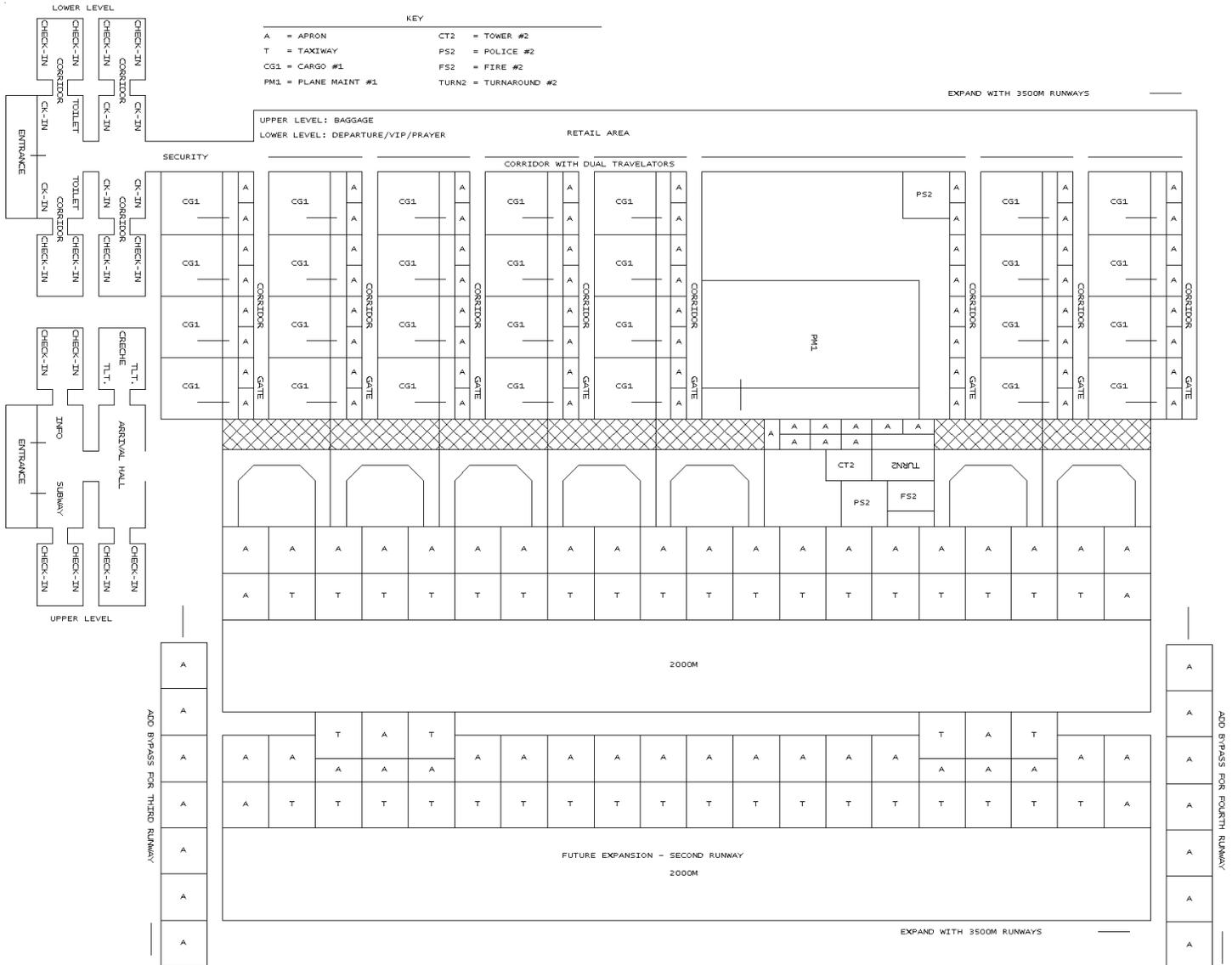
Well, you first need a 3000 meter runway. You then need a contract with Russian International Airways. There are a couple of others airlines with SST planes, but RIA is the easiest to land a contract with. If you start an airport in a European city, such as Munich or Amsterdam, you will be sure that RIA will eventually offer you a Master Contract. After that, it's just pure chance. It does help if you have a huge number of check-in desks in your terminal, but it doesn't guarantee a thing.

Gate and Terminal Layout:

The Elegant Check-in Area:

All the prefab terminals brainwash you into thinking that the entire edge of the plane stands must be covered by gate area, but there is a trick I use to add to this valuable real estate. Check the picture below for one way to deal with this. There are lots of different variations, but the “tentacle technique” is a must for an efficient plane stand area. The biggest advantage is that the planes and service vehicles no longer compete for the same taxiway.

A very important thing to notice is where each gate touches the plane stands... the third square from the left side. This is absolutely CRUCIAL. It allows replacement by the Jetway Plane Stands which become available later in the game.



Also notice how the plane maintenance building is centrally located. It is no more than five or six gates away from any plane. This will help cut down on delays due to refueling. Lately, I have been making the gates one square longer, inside. It buys you more room for seats, plants, and vending machines, which are requested later in the game. Feel free to extend the central corridor a bit longer, when you extend your runways. This creates LOTS of space for retail, VIP, Prayer Rooms, and Creches which are a big plus later in the game. I also add plane stands when I expand to four 3500m runways. If you add more than 7 on each side of the Plane Maintain building, the complaints start up again about delays. If you only have 14 plane stands, you don't have enough to max out your runways. Life is balance, right?

The three wide retail mall which connects all the gates should ONLY have its central corridor initially set as retail. Leave the center aisle unpopulated, and only set up the edges as retail when you get a contract offer. This lets you populate the mall entirely with single and double block units. Double block units exit against a gate entrance to prevent wasted space. Lately, I like the two-wide retail approach described earlier in this document.

The location of the police is important... one station every 30 spaces (or so). Notice, also, how the turnarounds are butted right up against the backside of the plane stands. Longer gates allow bigger turnarounds. Airport Maintenance seems most effective in reducing bird strikes when they are right out by the runways. The space around the Plane Maintenance building should be left fairly empty so you can install PM#2, #3, and #4 some day. The other corridors are for cargo buildings. Fill them up, and leave them. Check their properties once in a while. They get overworked, and cease to make money. Re-assign them to someone else until they complain about it. Eventually, the fault clears out.

The Elegant Check-in Area:

I like the following setup using two story terminal blocks. An 8x3 block backs up the entranceway. Two corridors extend from each side at the edge farthest away from the entry. Don't extend them more than 10 squares each if you intend to use them for Check-In. 1x4 blocks are added to the front and back edges of the extended corridors, with the four block edge bordering the corridor. These "pockets" have a one block gap separating them.

Leaving the walkway set up as a corridor, assign each four square pocket as check-in area. DON'T add doors to these pockets, as the customers don't need them. Maybe they all use E-Tickets... You can fit 36 check-in desks in each pocket. Assign one pocket for Cart Holds and one for service desks. This is the most efficient use of terminal space.

Begin by ONLY filling a single pocket with check-in desks. This will be plenty... for a while. When you gain a Master Contract with a new airline, assign (or create) a SINGLE desk to this customer, in this pocket. Do this regardless of whether they've asked for them or not. Never add extra desks, unless they specifically ask you to. Once they do, you should give that company it's own pocket, so you can keep track of what they have been assigned. Again, only add desks when asked. This hurts the desk's efficiency, but if you add more, they seem to use them up faster, and then ask for still more. The same goes for "general check-in".

Adding a Passenger Terminal to an existing airport:

As soon as you create a single block of new terminal on your map, your runways will shut down. If you let this go on too long, you may anger your clients, or even lose contracts.

To add a passenger terminal to an existing airport, set the game speed to its slowest setting. Figure out where you want that 8X3 block of whatever terminal type you want. As soon as you create it, add the entrance to the correct side, and immediately go inside the terminal. Click on the build icon, and drop a single square of "Gate Area" to the upper right corner of the 8X3 block. Now, you can click on the "runway icon" (which should be flashing), and this should re-open your airport. Now, you can take your time to build it up correctly. Don't delete the gate area until you have another gate area designated, or your runways will shut down again.

Satisfaction (I can't get no):

Customer satisfaction is needed to obtain a number one ranking. As a cargo-only airline, you won't win many awards, and the delays reported by the cargo drivers will keep you in the middle of the field for the first couple of years. Once you build your terminal, make sure that you pay attention to adding all the amenities to all areas. Benches, Photo Booths, Tannoys, Information Monitors, Seats, Fire Extinguishers, EVERYTHING! Add them liberally, to all areas. As soon as something new is offered, find a way to add it. The Creche and Prayer Room have the ability to double or even triple your CSI. Vending machines will make you a tiny amount of money, but they generate lots of CSI. It also makes a trip through your terminal more interesting using the Passenger Cam (grin).

Lists Of Helpful Information:

Aircraft Used by Carriers

Plane Name	Runway	Capacity
Leer Jet 0-24	1000	5
Leer Jet 45	2000	5
Leer Jet 0-31	3000	8
de Havillund Otter	1000	9
de Havillund Twin-Otter	1000	17
BAF Jetstream	2000	17
BAF Global Executive	2000	18
SARB 340	2000	27
De Havilund Sprint 8	1000	37
Arconov Ar 24	2000	43
Topelov TU-124V	1000	44
Lockspeed Constellation	3000	44
BAF Canadian	2000	44
BAF ATR 142	2000	45
Focker Friendship	2000	49
SARB 2000	2000	57
Vickers Viscount	1000	59
de Havilund Comet	3000	66
Topelov TU-104A	2000	67
Tupelov Tu134	3000	69
Harrison Trident	3000	75
Focker Fellowship	2000	78
Lockspeed Elektra	2000	79
McDonald Dougless DC-9	3000	86
BAF 111	2000	88
BAF 146	2000	88
Focker 100	2000	96
Bowing 707-120	3500	96
McDonald Dougless MD-95	3500	98

Plane Name	Runway	Capacity
Dougless DC-7	2000	98
Vickers Vangaurd	2000	105
Topelov Tu-144 (SST)	2000	106
Topelov Tu-133 (SST)	2000	106
Ilyakin Il 18	2000	108
Bowing 737	2000	113
Convaire 880	3000	117
Skybus A319	2000	122
Bowing 720	3000	129
McDonald Dougless MD-80	3500	134
Skybus A320	2000	144
Topelov Tu-154	2000	162
BAF Super VC10	3500	163
Skybus A321	2000	179
Bowing 757	2000	180
Skybus A340	3500	205
Skybus A310	3000	217
Bristel Britannia	3000	226
Ilyakin YAK 86	3500	240
Dougless DN-8	3000	241
Skybus A300	3000	252
McDonald Dougless MD-11	3500	257
Lockspeed Tristar	3000	286
Dougless DC10	3500	287
Bowing 777	3500	330
Bowing 767	3000	392
Bowing 747	3500	504

Buildings – Public Service

Type	Lev	Date Available	Cost	Benefits / Notes
Terminal Entrance	EMH	Immediately	\$10K	Only one allowed per terminal
Prefab Terminal #1	EM	Immediately	\$1.2M	
Prefab Terminal #2	EM	Immediately	\$2.4M	
Prefab Terminal #3	EM	Immediately	\$4.4M	
Prefab Terminal #4	EM	Immediately	\$10.4M	
Prefab Terminal #5	EM	Immediately	\$12.0M	
Prefab Terminal #6	EM	Immediately	\$22.9M	
Single Level - Terminal #1	MH	Immediately	\$20K	
Dual Level – Terminal #1	MH	Immediately	\$30K	
Single Level - Terminal #2	MH	3-Oct-71	\$25K	
Dual Level – Terminal #2	MH	3-Nov-71	\$37.5K	
Single Level - Terminal #3	MH	3-Jun-72	\$30K	
Dual Level – Terminal #3	MH	3-Sep-72	\$45K	
Single Level - Terminal #4	MH	3-Jul-73	\$35K	
Dual Level – Terminal #4	MH	3-Aug-73	\$52.5K	
Single Level - Terminal #5	MH	3-May-74	\$37.5K	
Dual Level – Terminal #5	MH	3-Jun-74	\$55K	
Single Level - Terminal #6	MH	3-Mar-75	\$40K	
Dual Level – Terminal #6	MH	3-Apr-75	\$60K	
Spectator Gallery #1	EMH	3-Jan-84	\$100K	
Spectator Gallery #2	EMH	3-Feb-90	\$500K	

Buildings – Airport Support

Type	Lev	Date Available	Cost	Benefits / Notes
Airport Maintain #1	EMH	Immediately	\$2M	Basic Service
Airport Maintain #2	EMH	3-Nov-72	\$3M	Adequate Service
Airport Maintain #3	EMH	8-Sep-75	\$5M	Good Service
Airport Maintain #4	EMH	3-Mar-85	\$7.5M	Very Good Service (Multi-Runway)
Airport Maintain #5	EMH	3-Jan-02	\$10M	Excellent Service
Plane Maintain #1	EMH	Immediately	\$5M	Some Light Repair
Plane Maintain #2	EMH	3-Aug-75	\$7.5M	All Light Repair
Plane Maintain #3	EMH	3-Nov-83	\$10M	Most Repairs and General Maintenance
Plane Maintain #4	EMH	3-Feb-04	\$15M	All Repairs and General Maintenance
Turnaround #1	EMH	Immediately	\$1M	Limited Service
Turnaround #2	EMH	3-Apr-76	\$1.75M	Modest Service
Turnaround #3	EMH	3-May-81	\$2.5M	Large Service
Turnaround #4	EMH	3-Jun-87	\$3.5M	Total Service
Small Control Tower	EMH	Immediately	\$1M	12 planes/hr
Medium Control Tower	EMH	3-May-72	\$3M	25 planes/hr
Large Control Tower	EMH	3-Jun-85	\$5M	50 planes/hr
Admin #1	EMH	Immediately	\$2M	Adequate Service
Admin #2	EMH	3-Oct-79	\$4M	High Quality Service
Admin #3	EMH	3-Sep-90	\$8M	Highest Quality Service

Buildings – Aircraft Stuff

Type	Lev	Date Available	Cost	Benefits / Notes
1000M Runway	EMH	Immediately	\$2.5M	Small Planes
2000M Runway	EMH	Immediately	\$5M	Restricted Use
3000M Runway	EMH	6-Feb-77	\$7.5M	Long Distance Aircraft
3500M Runway	EMH	3-Mar-84	\$10M	Largest Aircraft
Taxiway	EMH	Immediately	\$250	
Apron	EMH	Immediately	\$100	
Plane Stand	EMH	Immediately	\$10K	
Jetway (Plane Stand #2)	EMH	3-Nov-79	\$20K	Requires Dual Level Terminal
Helipad	EMH	3-Nov-82	\$50K	Make VIPs happier

Buildings – Cargo

Type	Lev	Date Available	Cost	Benefits / Notes
Cargo #1	EMH	Immediately	\$1.25M	Supports 3 Contracts
Cargo #2	EMH	3-Jan-79	\$2M	Supports 6 Contracts
Livestock #1	EMH	3-Jun-74	\$1.5M	Supports 3 Contracts
Livestock #2	EMH	3-May-82	\$2.5M	Supports 6 Contracts
Cold Storage #1	EMH	3-Apr-76	\$1M	Supports 3 Contracts
Cold Storage #2	EMH	3-Mar-85	\$1.75M	Supports 6 Contracts

Buildings – Transport

Type	Lev	Date Available	Cost	Benefits / Notes
Train Station #1	EMH	Immediately	\$1M	1000 passengers/hour
Train Station #2	EMH	3-Sep-82	\$2M	3000 passengers/hour
Taxi Rank	EMH	Immediately	\$10K	
Long-Stay Car Park	EMH	Immediately	\$25K	
Short-Stay Car Park	EMH	Immediately	\$1M	
Bus Stop	EMH	Immediately	\$2K	
Road	EMH	Immediately	\$200	
Train Track	EMH	Immediately	\$1K	
Gravel Lot	EMH	Immediately	\$5K	

Buildings – Safety

Type	Lev	Date Available	Cost	Benefits / Notes
Airport Police #1	EMH	Immediately	\$100K	Basic Service
Airport Police #2	EMH	3-Mar-74	\$250K	Adequate Service
Airport Police #3	EMH	3-Apr-79	\$500K	Good Service
Airport Police #4	EMH	3-May-98	\$500K	Excellent Service
Fire Station #1	EMH	Immediately	\$100K	Simple Equipment
Fire Station #2	EMH	Immediately	\$400K	Basic Equipment and one truck
Fire Station #3	EMH	3-Jun-80	\$800K	Basic Equipment and two trucks
Fire Station #4	EMH	3-May-94	\$1.5M	Good Equipment and three trucks
Infirmery #1	EMH	3-Jun-85	\$350K	
Infirmery #2	EMH	3-Jul-95	\$600K	

Buildings – Landscaping

Type	Lev	Date Available	Cost	Benefits / Notes
Concrete Slab	EMH	Immediately	\$200	For use as Sidewalk and Fill
Flowers – 4 Types	EMH	Immediately	\$200	Improves customer satisfaction... a bit.
Trees	EMH	Immediately	\$1K	Small ones... Otters don't like oaks.
Arch Sculpture	EMH	3-Jun-94	\$2.5K	Adds character to the airport
Plane Sculpture	EMH	3-Mar-96	\$1K	Adds character to the airport

Interior - Terminal:

Type	Lev	Date Available	Cost	Benefits / Notes
Subway	EMH	3-Jan-85	\$4K	Brings in more people
Prayer Room	EMH	3-Jan-88	\$500	Relax troubled passengers
Creche (Kid's Playroom)	EMH	3-Jan-91	\$500	Make kids happy and relax their parents.

Awards:

Special Merit Awards (SMA)	Qualification Criteria
National Economic SMA	Profits exceeded expectations and broke new financial record.
Security Standards Award	1 year without major criminal incident.
Global Routes SMA	50 national and international airline contracts.
SMA for Public Services	Over 1 million passengers (and each 5 million more).
SMA for Trade	15 cargo contracts.
SMA for High Safety Standards	1 year without major accident.
Supersonic Flight Award	Commemorates first supersonic flight arrival.
Well Kept Airport Award	Proper terminal design and landscaping.