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NewsRelease

Princess Juliana Int'l Airport marks awareness month for Foreign Object Debris (FOD)

SIMPSON BAY, St. Maarten (June 6, 2012)—The Princess Juliana Int'l Airport has launched a month of activities to mark awareness of Foreign Object Debris (FOD).

Foreign object debris at airports includes any object on the tarmac that can damage equipment or injure airplane or airport personnel. For the past four years the airport has been observing June as FOD month to raise awareness among the airport community.

The FOD month kicked off this year with the mandatory FOD walk for all personnel at the airport who work airside, which took place on June 1. During the walk, members of the airport community donned with special “No FOD” T-shirts and high visibility vests, scoured the runway with garbage bags – picking up any foreign object debris found along the way.

FOD can include a wide range of material, including loose hardware, pavement fragments, catering supplies, building materials, rocks, sand, pieces of luggage, and even wildlife or domestic animals.

FOD “causes damage through direct contact with airplanes, such as by cutting airplane tires or being ingested into engines, or as a result of being thrown by jet blast and damaging airplanes or injuring people. The resulting damage is estimated to cost the aerospace industry US\$4 billion a year,” according to Boeing’s online *Aero* magazine.

As part of the ongoing awareness campaign this June, PJIAE Operations Manager Michel Hyman will host several information sessions between June 12 – 28, for everyone who works at the gates or around the aircraft on the ground.

The people working at the gates and around the aircraft on the ground “are required to attend the sessions to get information on how to deal with and handle foreign object debris and how to prevent FOD within the work environment. Other methods of awareness will involve the distribution of information pamphlets on prevention methods,” Hyman said.

Hyman noted that although there have been instances of FOD in the past, Princess Juliana Int'l Airport does not have a FOD problem, which could be in part due to the ongoing awareness campaign.

“FOD can lead to catastrophic occurrences, but there have been none at this airport. There had been reports of small plastic objects, but we do not have the problem of birds, for example ... it is not that extreme,” Hyman said.

The month of activities, held in collaboration with the airlines, will end with another mandatory FOD walk at the end of the month.

Photo Caption:

At airside of the Princess Juliana Int'l Airport, energetic airport community members with bagged foreign object debris collected during the mandatory FOD walk (6.1.12). (*PJIAE photo*)