



ATSEP
Air Traffic Safety
Electronics Personnel





ATSEP stands for Air Traffic Safety Electronics Personnel. As the name suggests, these professionals help ensure safety of air traffic in their domain, the air navigation technical services. They also make a major and ever-growing contribution to ensuring the efficiency of traffic handling, both in the air and on the ground.

Working in air navigation service technology

Air navigation service technology is divided into:

- Air Traffic Management (ATM) and
- Communication, Navigation, Surveillance (CNS).

It extends to the following services and equipments:

- meteorological instruments to provide aeronautical weather services
- radio and telecommunications
- navigation and radar
- networks
- radar and flight plan data processing and
- air traffic controllers' workplace installations.

Furthermore, the availability of air navigation service technical equipment depends on uninterrupted power supplies and air-conditioning for the operating systems used.

The steady growth in air traffic volumes means that the proceedings in air navigation services must be continuously modified and adapted – a tendency that is also seeing the increasing use of software-based solutions in the technical field.

reliable

Challenging and exciting

The work in air navigation technical services is varied and demanding. Air navigation services rely on an extensive technical infrastructure, with field stations that are often placed in highly exposed locations, at national and regional airports and on military premises. Being the main service company in this domain, skyguide provides its services whatever the weather conditions may be, 24 hours a day and every day of the year. This also makes considerable demands on the company's workforce, in terms of shift work and on-call duty.

So in addition to their professional competences, ATSEP must also show high degrees of self-discipline and flexibility, and be able to cope with sizeable physical and psychological demands. Working beyond linguistic and cultural borders asks also for a pronounced ability to work in and as a team. Most of skyguide's technical personnel work in one of its two control centres in Geneva and Zurich. But, depending on their particular specialist skills, they may often be found at field stations, too.

ATSEP is a service profession of today that offers the opportunity to work in a dynamically-developing field along with strong future prospects and perspectives.



Serving the safety cause

Air navigation service technicians and engineers work together with pilots, air traffic controllers and their aircraft maintenance colleagues to guarantee the aviation safety chain. That's why air navigation service technology is based on the three principles of:

- integrity
- reliability and
- availability.

Aviation safety is heavily dependent on technical services. That fact is duly reflected in the current international ef-

How to become an ATSEP?

Behind the air navigation service technology, there are people with their specialist knowledge and skills. Those people have:

- basic technical training (an electronics apprenticeship or a degree from an appropriate academy, college or university of applied sciences, institute of technology or technical university)
- professional experience in a technical domain
- further specialist technical training (in electrical technology, electronics, high-frequency technology, software



orts to harmonise ATSEP training. Plans are also on the way to introduce a licensing procedure that is otherwise standard in the aviation world to all technical personnel performing safety-relevant or safety-critical tasks.

programming, information and communications technology or network technology).

In addition to the above, given the growing complexity of today's technical air navigation service equipment, interdisciplinary knowledge, approaches and actions are also coming to be increasingly required. And last but by no means least, an ATSEP must also have a basic understanding of the principles of air navigation services.

The profession is formally registered with the International Labour Organization, where it is officially described as an «Air Traffic Safety Technician».

One profession, many opportunities

ATSEPs perform the following activities on operating facilities, depending on their aptitude, training and qualifications:

- preventive and corrective maintenance
- hardware and software specifications
- modifications
- software integration and testing
- compiling and revising documentation and
- installation and commissioning.

The range of activities extends from in-depth theoretical studies to airborne calibrations of navigation and radar facilities and centralised systems monitoring within an operational control centre. In addition to the requisite technical expertise, project management skills are also required. Many ATSEPs have completed the corresponding training and eventually gone on to lead projects and programmes.

Later on in their careers, many of these air navigation service technicians and engineers move into management or specialist consultant positions. In these capacities, they may find themselves representing skyguide's and Switzerland's interests on international and supranational bodies such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) or Eurocontrol.

efficient





An attractive employer

Skyguide swiss air navigation services ltd is Switzerland's first employer of ATSEPs. The company provides air navigation services for all civil and military users of Swiss airspace and adjoining airspace areas in neighbouring countries. Skyguide's corps of some 300 ATSEPs works together every day with over 1000 colleagues from other company domains to ensure that the air traffic is handled safely and professionally and with as much attention as possible to specific customer needs. As a forward-looking company, skyguide continuously invests in the maintenance and renewal of its technical equipments, and in the initial and further training of its personnel. Further employers of ATSEPs include the air force, airports, suppliers to the air navigation services sector and skyguide's fellow air navigation service providers in other countries.

A competent professional association

Switzerland's ATSEPs are organised into the Swiss ATSEP Technical Association or SATTA. The association's prime aims are to promote an exchange of working experiences between ATSEPs employed with different organisations, high standards of initial and in-service training and the recognition and further development of the profession. SATTA is itself affiliated to the umbrella International Federation of Air Traffic Safety Electronics Associations or IFATSEA.

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