

# BUSINESS AIR NEWS

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## Payerne airport sees sharp rise in flights

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Since Speedwings launched FBO services from its brand new Payerne airport base in Spring 2019, the volume of business aviation traffic has exceeded expectations.



Analytics and process manager Christophe Larochette, ramp manager Syméon Rabaste, customer experience manager Nathalie Peters, COO Samuel Werner and fuel manager Saâd El Batane.

Despite the pandemic and the unprecedented restrictions for travellers, Payerne airport FBO Speedwings handled the same number of flights in 2020 as it did the previous year. In 2021 it saw three digit growth in terms of movements, as well as a sharp increase in the average MTOW of handled aircraft. Since Speedwings took over handling and FBO services in 2019, more than 180 operators have flown through the airport, and its busiest month to date was February 2022 with 157 flights.

Payerne airport's runway is the third longest available in Switzerland and can accommodate any kind of business jet. The dedicated civil apron is approved for up to CAT C aircraft as per ICAO reference aerodrome code, meaning BBJ, ACJ or Lineage types are accepted, and Speedwings' hangars have accommodated up to 14 aircraft simultaneously.

“We have had excellent feedback from our customers, both passengers and crew, who enjoy our well designed facilities such as VIP lounges, a wide crew area featuring work desks, a rest

zone, rooms with private showers, a laundry room and a kitchen,” says COO Samuel Werner. “In Payerne, crews can go straight from their aircraft to the rooms, which they appreciate at night after a long haul flight or with an early morning landing. Within less than 10 minutes the aircraft is towed inside our 6,600 sqm heated hangar, and the crew can go from there directly to their rooms.

“There are no questions about early check in or late check out times, there is no stress about ground transportation; crews can remain focused on their pre and post flight duties. They can easily access their aircraft to conduct FMS updates, perform checks or get the cabin ready for the next flight.”

Speedwings operates its own on-the-ramp Jet A-1 trucks, which are dedicated to business aviation, guaranteeing a quick response time. Toilet and potable water services are provided by ramp staff, and there is a courtesy hybrid crew car. On site customs allows Speedwings to accept extra-Schengen flights too.

Payerne Air base celebrated its 100th anniversary in late 2021, and for the first time ever de-icing and anti icing operations were made possible with Type I and IV fluids. Since then Speedwings has also implemented its own FBO frequency, 131.88MHz, which aids better communication.

Payerne is a useful option for travellers to the resort of Gstaad. "Thanks to our 2,800m long runway, with ILS/RNP approaches available on both sides (05/23), there are no performance questions to be concerned about," adds Werner. "Journey time is the same as from Bern-Belp for instance, but coming from the west side where the road is less tortuous."

The company is currently working to adapt its operational hours. At the moment it operates from 0730LT to 2000LT on weekdays, and from 0900LT to 1200LT and from 1330LT to 1700LT on Saturdays. "Extensions are possible up to 2200LT from Monday to Saturday, at an extra cost of just 30 per cent of the handling fee," says Werner. "Our goal is to open earlier and to operate on Sundays. For the time being civil operations are not possible on a Sunday, but as the military base here is available 24 hours, we will definitely get Sunday opening for civil flights."