

FIJI AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION CIRCULAR



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AIC 04/13
Effective
4 April 2013
OPS/ATC

MERCY FLIGHTS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 ***Mercy flight*** means a flight for the sole purpose of saving a person in a life threatening situation.
- 1.2 A Mercy flight involves contravening one or more of the air navigation regulations or standards. In view of the infrequent need for such operations, the Authority is prepared to consider relief from certain provisions of the regulations for the operation of a Mercy Flight

2. LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS

- 2.1 Mercy flights are authorised under Air Navigation Regulation 68 (3), (4) and the Standards Document - Mercy Flights.
- 2.2 AOC holders may elect to carry out mercy flights or may decide that they are not prepared to participate in such operations. If they decide that they are not prepared to do so, then they should say so in their operations manual. If they are prepared to consider undertaking a mercy flight when so requested, then they are required to address the subject in their operations manual as per requirements of ANR 43 (4) (q).
- 2.3 A pilot who elects to carry out a Mercy flight, shall, in addition to the requirements of the SD Mercy flights, ensure that the provisions of ANR 31 are complied with at all times.

3. APPLICATION

3.1 FLIGHT OPERATIONS

- 3.1.1 Operators who carry out Mercy flights shall do so in accordance with the requirements stipulated in the SD Mercy Flights.
- 3.1.2 A flight shall not be declared a Mercy Flight when all the requirements of the applicable regulations can be complied with and the patient is transported as an ordinary passenger or when the aircraft is undertaking a Search and Rescue (SAR) operation and receives the appropriate special consideration or priority from air traffic services. Notwithstanding

the declaration of a mercy flight, normal flight rules apply to the maximum extent possible in the circumstances.

- 3.1.3 Pilots should be aware that stress generated by the urgency of a mercy flight may compromise their decision making ability. Coupled with a contravention of normal flight rules, poor risk analysis may result in poor quality decisions.
- 3.1.4 A pilot should declare a mercy flight only after evaluating all known factors and assessing the risks that are likely to be encountered during the flight. He or she must be satisfied that although the flight will involve a breach of regulations, the flight can nevertheless be conducted without significantly increased level of risk. Although the ANR 68 authorises the declaration of a mercy flight, the pilot and operator remain bound by ANR 31, which prohibits careless or reckless operations.
- 3.1.5 The final decision as to whether or not the mercy flight will be undertaken shall rest solely with the pilot-in-command.
- 3.1.6 When the pilot-in-command has satisfied himself that the mercy flight can be carried out successfully and in reasonable safety, he shall notify the appropriate air traffic service unit of all pertinent details and identify the operation as a MERCY FLIGHT.
- 3.1.7 The notification shall, in addition to normal flight plan details, include the basic reason for the flight and the reporting points or times at which appropriate reports will be made to the air traffic service unit and details of the arrangements made or any assistance required at the destination.
- 3.1.8 If a normal flight develops into a mercy flight, the pilot in command should advise ATS of the circumstances and request assistance as required. Conversely, if the critical phase of the flight has passed, the pilot should advise ATS if normal service will suffice for the rest of the flight.
- 3.1.9 A mercy flight should, after consultation with the competent authority (medical or Police) in relation to the relief required by the patient and any operational considerations, be restricted to the nearest airport, hospital or facility where such relief can be provided to the patient or from where other transportation, if appropriate, is available.
- 3.1.9 A mercy flight should not commence unless continuous two-way radio communications with the appropriate air traffic service unit can be maintained throughout the flight. However, where this capability may not be readily available, then the use of an alternative communication capability can be considered acceptable provided some form of flight watch or flight monitoring of the flight is established. Air traffic services will provide appropriate priority, maintain a special watch on the progress of the flight, notify appropriate ground organisations and provide the pilot with the appropriate advice and information on conditions or action taken.

- 3.1.10 Immediately after the completion of the mercy flight, the pilot-in-command shall submit to the Authority a report on all aspects of the operation made under the provisions for such flights, the factors which led to his decision to make the flight, the name and address of the person (s) requesting the mercy flight, the name of the patient, if applicable, and all relevant flight details.

3.2 AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES

- 3.2.1 ATS grants special consideration or priority to any flight notified as a Mercy Flight.
- 3.2.2 ATS shall accord the appropriate priority as per the provisions of the Fiji Manual of Air Traffic Services.
- 3.2.3 Upon advice by the pilot in command of the operation of the Mercy flight, ATS shall use the phraseology:-

“Operate at your discretion, traffic is”

- 3.2.4 An entry shall be made in the relevant ATS Log book whenever a Mercy flight is authorised.

4. WHO CAN DECLARE A MERCY FLIGHT

- 4.1 Any relevant person in authority such as a doctor, police officer, fire fighting commander, rescue coordinator etc. may request the use of an aircraft for an emergency purpose, but only the pilot in command can declare a mercy flight.