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GUIDANCE FOR AIR OPERATORS IN ESTABLISHING A FLIGHT SAFETY DOCUMENTS SYSTEM

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this AIC is to provide air operators with guidance on the organization and development of the operator's flight safety documents system for the use and guidance of operational personnel the guidance Ref: CAAF SD-International Commercial Air Transport Aeroplanes (**SD-ICAT**) **Attachment F.**

2. APPLICABILITY

Under the SD-ICAT 3.3.4 The operator shall establish a Flight Safety Documents System for the use and guidance of operational personnel, as part of its **safety management system**.

3. REFERENCES

3.1 Guidelines applicable to the development of operational documents have been produced by government and industry sources and are available to operators such guidelines are required to be acceptable by the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji before its implementation.

3.2 The following reference material as amended from time to time may be consulted for information purposes**:**

(i) Developing Operating Documents – A Manual of Guidelines; NASA/FAA/EASA Operating documents Project.

(ii) CAP 676 – Guidelines for the Design and Presentation of Emergency and Abnormal Checklists; UK CAA. Available on the CAA website: https://www.caa.co.uk/our-work/publications/documents/content/cap-676/

(iii) CAP 708 – Guidance on the Design, Presentation and Use of Electronic Checklists. Available on the CAA website: https://www.caa.co.uk/our-work/publications/documents/content/cap-708/

(iv) United Kingdom Overseas Territories Aviation Circular OTAC 119-9 Flight Safety Documents System as amended.

4. DEFINITIONS / ABBREVIATIONS

The following definitions are reproduced for ease of reference:

Flight safety documents system (FSDS) means a set of inter-related documentation established by the operator, compiling and organizing information necessary for flight and ground operations, and comprising, as minimum, the operations manual and the operator's maintenance control manual.

Quality assurance means all those planned and systematic actions necessary to provide adequate confidence that a system, component, or facility will perform satisfactorily in service.

Safety management system (SMS) means a systematic approach to managing safety, including the necessary organisational structures, accountabilities, policies and procedures.

(i) AIC: Aeronautical Information Circular
(ii) NASA: National Aeronautics and Space Administration
(iii) FAA: Federal Aviation Administration
(iv) EASA: European Union Aviation Safety Agency:
(v) UK CAA: United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority
(vi) OTAC: Overseas Territories Aviation Circular
(vii) CAP: Civil Aviation Publication (UK CAA)

5. BACKGROUND

5.1 The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) found that it was possible to see an association between identified deficiencies in operational documents and accident rates. Deficiencies in operational documents are considered to have been contributing factors in a number of accidents and a great many incidents worldwide. This led to the development of the standards and recommended practices (SARPs) in ICAO Annex 6, to emphasise the need for operators to adopt an integrated approach and to consider their operational documents as part of a complete system.

5.2 The structured analysis of accident and incident data, as part of the Flight Safety Documentation System (FSDS), is essential for enhancing operational safety and minimizing risk exposure. This process supports the Safety Management System (SMS) by enabling a systematic, organization-wide approach to hazard identification and risk mitigation. Effective use of safety data not only improves safety outcomes but also reduces potential operational and financial losses associated with safety occurrences.

5.3 This continuous improvement cycle not only supports regulatory compliance but also fosters a safety culture that prioritizes risk management, operational resilience, and sustainable performance.

6. FLIGHT SAFETY DOCUMENTS SYSTEM

6.1 It should be understood that the development of a flight safety documents system is a complete process, and that changes to each document comprising the system may affect the entire system. Guidelines applicable to the development of operational documents have been produced by CAA and are available to air operators. Nevertheless, it may be difficult for operators to make the best use of these guidelines, since they are distributed across a number of publications.

6.2 Furthermore, guidelines applicable to operational documents development tend to focus on a single aspect of documents design, for example, formatting and typography. Guidelines rarely cover the entire process of operational documents development.

6.3 It is important for operational documents to be consistent with each other, and consistent with regulations, manufacturer requirements and Human Factors principles. It is also necessary to ensure consistency across departments as well as consistency in application. Hence the emphasis should be placed on an integrated approach, based on the notion of the operational documents as a complete system.

6.4 The guidelines in this AIC address the major aspects of an operator's flight safety documents system development process, with the aim of ensuring compliance with SD-International Commercial Air Transport (SD-ICAT). The guidelines are based not only upon scientific research, but also upon current best industry practices, with an emphasis on a high degree of operational relevance.

7. ORGANIZATION

7.1 A flight safety documents system should be organized according to criteria which ensure easy access to information required for flight and ground operations contained in the various operational documents comprising the system and which facilitate management of the distribution and revision of operational documents.

7.2 Information contained in a flight safety documents system should be grouped according to the importance and use of the information, as follows:

(i) Time critical information, e.g., information that can jeopardize the safety of the operation if not immediately available;

(ii) Time sensitive information, e.g., information that can affect the level of safety or delay the operation if not available in a short time period;
(iii) Frequently used information.
(iv) Reference information, e.g., information that is required for the operation but does not fall under b) or c) above; and
(v) Information that can be grouped based on the phase of operation in which it is used.

7.3 Time critical information should be placed early and prominently in the flight safety documents system.

7.4 Time critical information, time sensitive information, and frequently used information should be placed in quick-reference guides.

8. VALIDATION

The flight safety documents system should be validated before deployment, under realistic conditions. Validation should involve the critical aspects of the information use, in order to verify its effectiveness. Interactions among all groups that can occur during operations should also be included in the validation process.

9. DESIGN

9.1 A flight safety documents system should maintain consistency in terminology and in the use of standard terms for common items and actions.

9.2 Operational documents should include a glossary of terms, acronyms and their standard definition, updated on a regular basis to ensure access to the most recent terminology. All significant terms, acronyms and abbreviations included in the flight documents system should be defined.

9.3 A flight safety documents system should ensure standardization across document types, including writing style, terminology, use of graphics and symbols, and formatting across documents. This includes a consistent location of specific types of information, consistent use of units of measurement and consistent use of codes.

9.4 A flight safety documents system should include a master index to locate, in a timely manner, information included in more than one operational document.

Note. — The master index must be placed in the front of each document and consist of no more than three levels of indexing.

9.5 Pages containing abnormal and emergency information must be tabbed for direct access.

9.6 A flight safety documents system should comply with the requirements of the operator's quality system, if applicable.

10. DEPLOYMENT

Operators should monitor deployment of the flight safety documents system, to ensure appropriate and realistic use of the documents, based on the characteristics of the operational environment and in a way which is both operationally relevant and beneficial to operational personnel. This monitoring should include a formal feedback system for obtaining input from operational personnel

11. AMENDMENT

11.1 Operators should develop an information gathering, review, distribution and revision control system to process information and data obtained from all sources relevant to the type of operation conducted, including, but not limited to, the State of the Operator, State of design, State of Registry, manufacturers and equipment vendors.

Note. — Manufacturers provide information for the operation of specific aircraft that emphasizes the aircraft systems and procedures under conditions that may not fully match the requirements of operators. Operators should ensure that such information meets their specific needs and those of the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji.

11.2 Operators should develop an information gathering, review and distribution system to process information resulting from changes that originate within the operator, including:

(a) changes resulting from the installation of new equipment;
(b) changes in response to operating experience;
(c) changes in the operator's policies and procedures;
(d) changes in the operator certificate; and
(e) changes for purposes of maintaining cross fleet standardization.

Note. — Operators should ensure that crew coordination philosophy, policies and procedures are specific to their operation.

11.3 A flight safety documents system should be reviewed:

(a) on a regular basis (at least once a year);
(b) after major events (mergers, acquisitions, rapid growth, downsizing, etc.);
(c) after technology changes (introduction of new equipment); and
(d) after changes in safety regulations.

11.3 Operators should develop methods of communicating new information. The specific methods should be responsive to the degree of communication urgency.

Note. — As frequent changes diminish the importance of new or modified procedures, it is desirable to minimize changes to the flight safety documents system.

11.4 New information should be reviewed and validated considering its effects on the entire flight safety documents system.

11.5 The method of communicating new information should be complemented by a tracking system to ensure currency by operational personnel. The tracking system should include a procedure to verify that operational personnel have the most recent updates.

12. A flight safety document system needs to include a verification mechanism to ensure that, whenever a section of a document is amended, all other documents likely to be affected are identified and that consequential amendments are duly coordinated and agreed to by the responsible departments before the amendment is processed.

The principles of the Flight Safety Documentation System apply to the following documents as an example: