

Advisory Circular

GUIDANCE ON EMERGENCY PLANNING

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GENERAL

Advisory Circulars (ACs) are issued by the Director-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) from time to time to provide practical guidance or certainty in respect of the statutory requirements for aviation safety. ACs contain information about standards, practices and procedures acceptable to CAAS. An AC may be used, in accordance with section 11 of the Air Navigation Act 1966 (ANA), to demonstrate compliance with a statutory requirement. The revision number of the AC is indicated in parenthesis in the suffix of the AC number.

PURPOSE

This AC provides the guidance to demonstrate compliance with, and information related to the emergency planning at the aerodrome, where an emergency plan must be established and the emergency exercises to test its adequacy.

APPLICABILITY

This AC is applicable to an operator who intends to or holds an aerodrome certificate or heliport certificate.

RELATED REGULATIONS

This AC relates specifically to Regulation 35 of the Air Navigation (139 – Aerodromes) Regulations 2023 (“ANR-139”).

CANCELLATION

This AC supersedes AC 139-7-3(0) dated 1 March 2023. This revision updates that the aerodrome operator should involve ground handling service providers in the aerodrome emergency plan.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This AC is effective from 5 August 2025.

OTHER REFERENCES

- ICAO Airport Services Manual (Doc 9137), Part 1 Rescue and firefighting
- ICAO Airport services manual (Doc 9137), Part 7 Airport emergency planning

- ICAO Human factors training manual (Doc 9683)
- ICAO PANS Aerodromes (Doc 9981)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Aerodrome emergency planning is the process of preparing an aerodrome to cope with an emergency occurring at the aerodrome or in its vicinity. The objective of aerodrome emergency planning is to minimize the effects of an emergency, particularly in respect of saving lives and maintaining aircraft operations. The aerodrome emergency plan sets forth the procedures for coordinating the response of different aerodrome agencies (or services) and of those agencies in the surrounding community that could be of assistance in responding to the emergency. Guidance material to assist the operator in establishing aerodrome emergency planning is given in the ICAO Airport services manual, Part 7.

2 AERODROME EMERGENCY PLAN

- 2.1 Regulation 35 requires the operator to establish an emergency plan. The following are examples of emergency scenarios that the plan should consider and address:

- (a) aircraft crash on land
- (b) aircraft crash at sea
- (c) fires on ground
- (d) dangerous goods incidents
- (e) bomb warnings
- (f) unlawfully seized aircraft
- (g) building fires
- (h) natural disaster
- (i) public health emergencies - serious communicable diseases potentially affecting a large proportion of travellers, and aerodrome staff.

- 2.2 The aerodrome emergency plan must coordinate the response or participation of any person which, in the opinion of the aerodrome operator, could be of assistance in responding to an emergency. Such persons should include:

- (a) Within the aerodrome
 - (i) air traffic control units;
 - (ii) rescue and fire fighting services;
 - (iii) aerodrome administration;
 - (iv) medical and ambulance services;
 - (v) aircraft operators;
 - (vi) ground handling service providers
 - (vii) security services; and
 - (viii) police.
- (b) Outside of the aerodrome
 - (i) fire departments;
 - (ii) police;
 - (iii) health authorities (includes medical, ambulance, hospital and public health services);
 - (iv) military; and
 - (v) harbour patrol or coast guard.

- 2.3 The public health services mentioned in Paragraph 2.2(b)(iii) should include planning to minimise adverse effects to the community from health-related events and deal with population health issues rather than provision of health services to individuals.
- 2.4 The aerodrome emergency plan must provide for cooperation and coordination amongst the various parties involved, including the rescue and coordination centre, as necessary.
- 2.5 The aerodrome emergency plan must observe human factor principles to ensure optimum response by each person participating in emergency operations. Guidance material on human factors principles can be found in Human Factors Training Manual (Doc 9683), while general principles and procedures on the training of aerodrome personnel, including training programmes and competence checks, are specified in the PANS – Aerodromes (Doc 9981).

3 AERODROME EMERGENCY EXERCISE

- 3.1 The aerodrome emergency plan must be tested on its adequacy through appropriate emergency exercises at the aerodrome. This includes having procedures in the plan that are for the periodic testing of the adequacy of the plan and for reviewing the results in order to improve its effectiveness.
- 3.2 This aerodrome emergency plan also includes testing by either conducting:
 - (a) a full-scale aerodrome emergency exercise at intervals not exceeding two years and partial emergency exercises in the intervening year to ensure that any deficiencies found during the full-scale aerodrome emergency exercise have been corrected; or
 - (b) a series of modular tests commencing in the first year and concluding in a full-scale aerodrome emergency exercise at intervals not exceeding three years.
- 3.3 The testing should include all participating agencies and associated equipment.
- 3.4 The purpose of full-scale exercises is to ensure the adequacy of the plan to cope with different types of emergencies. The purpose of a partial exercise is to ensure the adequacy of the response by individual participating agencies and components of the plan, such as the communications system. The purpose of modular tests is to enable concentrated effort on specific components of established emergency plans. Guidance material on airport emergency planning is available in the ICAO Airport Services Manual (Doc 9137), Part 7.
- 3.5 The plan should be reviewed thereafter, or after an actual emergency, so as to correct any deficiency found during such exercises or in an actual emergency.

4 EMERGENCIES IN DIFFICULT ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 At aerodromes located close to water and/or swampy areas, or difficult terrain, the aerodrome emergency plan must include the establishment, testing and assessment at regular intervals of a pre-determined response for the specialist rescue services.
- 4.2 An assessment of the approach and departure areas within 1,000 m of the runway threshold should be carried out to determine the options available for emergency

response. Guidance material on assessing approach and departure areas within 1 000 m of runway thresholds can be found in Chapter 13 of the Airport Services Manual (Doc 9137), Part 1.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Each airport emergency plan should be co-ordinated between the airport and the surrounding community. This is desirable as the planning and procedures needed to handle major emergency situations at the airport are similar to other types of major emergencies that can strike a community. An effective rescue effort requires adequate planning for the emergency as well as execution of the periodic practice exercises.