SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN 2026-03

Issue 01
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SUBJECT:
OPERATIONAL AWARENESS AND COORDINATION DURING PERIODS OF OPERATIONAL VARIABILITY

APPLICABILITY:

UAE AERODROME OPERATORs

REFERENCE PUBLICATIONS:

- CAR PART IX, AERODROME REGULATIONS (CAR ADR; CAR AGA, PARTS ADR, ACM, TRG, VFI)
- CAR PART XI, AERODROME EMERGENCY SERVICES, FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS
- CAR PART X, SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SMS) REGULATIONS (CAR SMS; CAR OCR)

PURPOSE:

The General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) recognises that aerodrome operators across the UAE maintain mature Safety Management Systems (SMS) and established operational processes for managing operational risks and resilience during periods of abnormal or changing operational conditions.

This bulletin is issued to:

- Acknowledge the continued professionalism demonstrated by aerodrome operators across the UAE aviation sector; and
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- Encourage the continued use of established safety management, operational coordination, and contingency planning processes to effectively manage evolving operational circumstances while maintaining safe aerodrome operations.

BACKGROUND

Aerodrome operators routinely manage changes in operational conditions through structured processes that support hazard identification, risk assessment, and implementation of appropriate mitigation measures. These processes form a core component of modern Safety Management Systems, enabling organisations to maintain safe and resilient operations during periods of operational variability.

The GCAA acknowledges the proactive steps already being undertaken by aerodrome operators and other aviation stakeholders to maintain operational readiness, situational awareness, and coordination during the current operating environment.

INFORMATION

(a) OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR AERODROME OPERATORS:

Aerodrome operators are encouraged to continue utilising their established SMS frameworks, operational procedures, and coordination mechanisms to maintain safe aerodrome operations.

In particular, aerodrome operators may wish to consider the following areas:

(1) Operational Risk Management

Aerodrome operators should ensure that operational hazards arising from changing conditions are assessed through established SMS risk management processes.

This may include:

- Conducting dynamic risk assessments where operational conditions change rapidly;
- Reviewing the adequacy of existing mitigation measures and operational limitations; and
- Ensuring appropriate documentation, monitoring, and review of implemented controls.

(2) Airfield Monitoring and Inspection

Aerodrome operators should continue to conduct routine airfield inspections in accordance with established procedures and remain attentive to any abnormal conditions or observations. Where unusual findings are identified, appropriate coordination with the relevant national authorities should be undertaken in accordance with established protocols. Consideration may also be given to increasing inspection frequency where operational conditions warrant.

(3) Operational Variations

Where operational circumstances require temporary adjustments to normal operations including aircraft operations, infrastructure availability, or operational configurations, aerodrome operators should ensure that such variations are appropriately assessed and managed through internal processes.

Established Local Runway Safety Teams (LRSTs) provide a useful forum for collaborative discussion between aerodrome operators, ANSPs, and aircraft operators where operational considerations affect runway or manoeuvring area operations.

(4) Crisis Management

Aerodrome operators must ensure that strategic crisis management arrangements remain fully functional. Aerodrome operators should therefore review their crisis management frameworks to ensure that:

- Strategic crisis management structures are clearly established and understood
- Senior leadership personnel responsible for crisis management remain available and prepared to assume command roles
- The aerodrome crisis management team can be rapidly convened when required
- Crisis coordination procedures with government authorities and national crisis management entities remain clearly defined
- Mechanisms exist to manage strategic decision-making, stakeholder communication, and operational recovery

Where appropriate, aerodrome operators should confirm that crisis management arrangements remain aligned with national crisis and emergency management systems.

(5) Business Continuity

Aerodrome operators should review their Business Continuity Management (BCM) arrangements to ensure that critical aerodrome services and infrastructure can be sustained during periods of disruption. This includes ensuring continuity of:

- Critical airside and landside operational services
- Emergency response services
- Critical communication and information systems
- Command and coordination facilities
- Critical airside infrastructure
- Procedures related to runway closures, infrastructure limitations, or operational disruptions

Aerodrome operators should ensure that contingency arrangements exist to maintain safe aerodrome operations even under extended or complex disruption scenarios and may consider scenario-based reviews or internal coordination exercises to ensure continued preparedness.

(6) Emergency Preparedness

Aerodrome operators should review the readiness and effectiveness of their Airport Emergency Plans (AEP) to ensure that emergency response arrangements remain immediately deployable. In particular, aerodrome operators should verify that:

- The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and Mobile Command Posts remain operationally ready at all times
- Emergency response personnel are available for rapid mobilisation
- Communication systems supporting emergency response operations remain fully functional and interoperable
- Procedures for mass casualty management, humanitarian response, and family assistance operations remain current and effective

Aerodrome operators are encouraged to conduct internal coordination meetings or readiness reviews to confirm the preparedness of all responding agencies.

(7) Rescue and Fire Fighting Services (RFFS)

Rescue and firefighting services must maintain continuous operational readiness in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements. Aerodrome operators should confirm that:

- The promulgated RFFS category protection levels are continuously maintained
- All firefighting vehicles, firefighting agents, and specialised rescue equipment are serviceable and immediately deployable
- Staffing levels remain sufficient to sustain continuous operational response capability
- Communication between RFFS units, air traffic services, and aerodrome operations remains reliable and effective

Particular emphasis should be placed on maintaining the ability to respond effectively to large aircraft incidents, complex emergencies, or simultaneous operational disruptions.

(8) Diversion Aerodrome Preparedness

Aerodrome operators that may serve as alternate or diversion aerodromes are encouraged to review their operational readiness to accommodate aircraft that may exceed the aerodrome's normally declared operational category.

This may include situations where aircraft larger than those normally served by the aerodrome are diverted due to operational, technical, or emergency circumstances.

Aerodrome operators may wish to consider the following:

- Conducting a comprehensive review of the aerodrome's operational capabilities and available resources to support the safe handling of larger aircraft where diversions may reasonably be expected.
- Assessing the adequacy of Rescue and Fire Fighting Services (RFFS), apron capacity, passenger handling capability, ground handling equipment, and aircraft servicing support to accommodate such aircraft safely.

- Ensuring appropriate coordination with Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs), aircraft operators, and relevant emergency services where diversion scenarios could introduce operational limitations.
- Reviewing contingency procedures and emergency response arrangements to ensure that the aerodrome can effectively manage unexpected arrivals of larger aircraft during abnormal or emergency situations.
- Considering the availability of appropriate passenger reception, welfare, and humanitarian support arrangements, particularly in situations where large numbers of passengers may need to remain at the aerodrome for extended periods following an unscheduled diversion. This may include coordination with relevant stakeholders to ensure the availability of basic passenger welfare support, and coordination with airline representatives where required.

(b) SUMMARY:

Where operational limitations exist, aerodrome operators are encouraged to ensure that these are appropriately assessed through their Safety Management System and communicated through established operational coordination mechanisms.

The GCAA remains available to provide appropriate regulatory guidance and support through established processes where operational circumstances require timely coordination.

CONTACT:

For inquiries and further information, please contact your principal inspector