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MINIMUM COCKPIT OCCUPANCY

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Referenced publication(s):

MCAR Part CAT.OP.MPA.210 - Crew members at stations

Applicability

3B registered Aircraft operating in Commercial Air Transport (CAT) category with operators of large aeroplanes equipped with a secure flight crew compartment door.

Description

Recent accidents highlighted the risk associated with a flight crew member remaining alone in a flight crew compartment equipped with a secure door and being able to deliberately lock out the other crew member(s).

After the recent accidents, the DCA sought feedback from affected stakeholders and on the elements to be considered in performing the risk assessment and in defining the appropriate mitigating measures, including the role of the authorised person in the cockpit other than the remaining flight crew member.

Several Aviation Authorities and air operators have been requiring the presence of two authorised persons in the flight crew compartment at all times. Currently, there are no indications that such requirement has introduced risks that would outweigh the risk of having a flight crew member deliberately locked out of the cockpit.

Recommendation(s):

MCAR Part CAT.OP.MPA.210 stipulates that flight crew members required to be on duty in the flight crew compartment shall remain at the assigned station, unless absence is necessary for the performance of duties in connection with the operations or for physiological needs, provided at least one suitably qualified pilot remains at the controls of the aircraft at all times.

In such cases, the DCA recommends operators to assess the safety and security risks associated with a flight crew member remaining alone in the flight crew compartment.

This assessment should take the following elements into account:

- (1) the operator's psychological and security screening policy of flight crews;
- (2) employment stability and turnover rate of flight crews;
- (3) access to a support programme, providing psychological support and relief to flight crew when needed; and
- (4) ability of the operator's management system to mitigate psychological and social risks.

If the assessment leads the operator to require two authorised persons in accordance with CAT.GEN.MPA.135 to be in the flight crew compartment at all times, operators should ensure that:

- (a) the role of the authorised person, other than the operating pilot, in the flight crew compartment is clearly defined, considering that his/her main task should be to open the secure door when the flight crew member who left the compartment returns;
- (b) only suitably qualified flight crew members are allowed to sit at the controls;
- (c) safety and security procedures are established for his/her presence in the flight crew compartment (e.g. operation of the flight deck, specific procedure for entry, use of observer seat and oxygen masks, avoidance of distractions etc.);
- (d) training needs are addressed and identified as appropriate;
- (e) safety risks stemming from the authorised person leaving the passenger cabin are assessed and mitigated, if necessary; and
- (f) resulting procedures are detailed in the Operations Manual and, when relevant, the related security reference documents.

Final result of the Safety Assessment of two authorised persons being at all time in the cockpit shall be communicate to the DCA.


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