



ICAO

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

Twenty Sixth Meeting of the Africa-Indian Ocean Planning and Implementation Regional Group (APIRG/26)

7 - 8 November 2023

Agenda Item 3: Implementation of air navigation goals, targets, and indicators, including the priorities set in the regional air navigation plan

3.6. Other Air Navigation Initiatives

DISABLED AIRCRAFT RECOVERY FACILITATION

(Presented by Rwanda)

SUMMARY	
<p>This paper presents an update on Rwanda’s activities on operational and safety matters related to the safe and efficient return to operations of airports in the event of an accident or incident. The paper examines the availability of aircraft recovery equipment in Africa, and provides update on Disabled Aircraft Recovery equipment and services in Rwanda.</p> <p>Action by the Meeting is at paragraph 3.</p>	
<i>Strategic Objectives</i>	<p>This paper relates to the following Strategic Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aviation Safety • Accidents and incidents • Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency • Facilitation • Economic development
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICAO Annex 14, Vol 1 • ICAO Annex 9 • ICAO Doc 9137 Part 5

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Annex 14 — Aerodromes, Volume I — Aerodrome Design and Operations, 9.3.1, specifies that each aerodrome must draw up a comprehensive plan for the removal of a disabled aircraft on, or adjacent to, the movement area and a coordinator designated to implement the plan, when necessary.

1.2 The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) defines the responsibilities for the timely removal of a disabled aircraft in ICAO doc 9137 Airport Service Manual (ASM) Part

5. It states that “*responsibilities for the removal of a disabled aircraft lie not only with the aircraft operator but also with the state and the aerodrome operator. For an aircraft removal operation to begin and be completed as quickly as possible, all parties must be expeditiously facilitated and already have the proper procedures in place. An efficient removal operation requires sufficient planning and readily accessible recovery equipment.*”

1.3 In 2022, at least 143 incidents with disabled aircraft have occurred globally, averaging 3 incidents per week (as per RESQTEC Aircraft Recovery Statistics Report 2022). With 13% of disabled aircraft incidents occurring in Africa, the AFI region was among the highest accident rate of runway excursions. These incidents cause runway and airport closures that, on average, take 17 hours to resolve. While the majority of the incidents fall within the category I (i.e., light incidents such as a flat tire, landing gear bogging, etc.), the average closure time of a runway or airport remains high. The longest recovery operation took at least 168 hours (seven days).

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 *Disabled Aircraft Recovery Responsibility*

2.1.1 Airports cannot afford to wait 24 hours or even a week before a disabled aircraft is removed from the runway. A runway closure this long creates a tremendous financial loss to airports. As per the aforementioned statistics, it is evident that both aircraft and airport operators often lack the required preparation, qualified staff, and equipment (e.g., aircraft lifting equipment, aircraft moving equipment, support equipment) to perform a quick and safe aircraft recovery operation.

2.1.2 While the aircraft operator always remains in charge of what happens to their aircraft, the actual aircraft recovery operation may be outsourced to appropriate authorities such as the airport operator or other third parties. This will support the timely removal of the disabled aircraft and restart of operations.

2.2 *Availability of Aircraft Recovery Equipment in Africa*

2.2.1 An aircraft removal incident can occur at any time and in any weather conditions with varying degrees of magnitude. These removal operations can range from minor de-bogging to major events including damaged or missing landing gear. While incidents cannot be predicted, they can be anticipated and prepared for.

2.2.2 Rwanda Airports Company has acquired a state-of-the-art aircraft removal equipment capable of operating a range of aircraft from Code A to Code F and is available at Kigali International Airport. This equipment when required can be used to serve most of the airports in Africa within six hours.

2.2.3 Effective recovery of the aircraft requires:

- Planning: Airport operators and aircraft operators are mandated to have aircraft removal plans that include aircraft de-bogging, recovery, and salvaging;
- Preparation:

- *Training.* Identify training needs of all personnel based on competence, expertise, and the hazard risk related to position and type of work to ensure an effective/efficient execution recovery plan in relation to the equipment.
- *Qualified personnel:* Only competent personnel ought to carry out the recovery exercise to ensure no further damage is incurred during the process. This is based on the individual's background, expertise, training, and experience.
- *Equipment:* Depending on the aircraft and incident, different equipment is required to ensure a safe and efficient recovery.
- *Practice:* As per ICAO Doc 9137, part 5, It is suggested that the aerodrome operator, in conjunction with the aircraft operators, hold regular tabletop exercises in order to anticipate various aircraft removal scenarios and their projected outcomes.
- *Recovery:* The disabled aircraft must be removed in a timely and efficient manner. If the aircraft operator fails to take responsibility for the removal operation, the aerodrome operator may take over the responsibility and contract the removal to a third party; and
- *Reporting processes:* Coordination among the State, airport operator, aircraft operator, investigation authority, and insurance underwriter is key in ensuring timelines recovery of aircraft.

2.2.5 Rwanda will continue to collaborate closely with Member States and industry to avail a comprehensive and collaborative approach to aircraft recovery in order to support the safe continued operations in the aviation ecosystem.

3 ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information provided in this paper; and
- b) Encourage States and operators who may need Disabled Aircraft Recovery services to contact Rwanda.