ICAO

AIR NAVIGATION WORLD 2023

Shaping the Skies of Tomorrow

The medical volunteer

- Not present every time
    - From 40% to 80%

- Uncomfortable with the situation
    - Does not know the medical kit content
    - Altitude physiology
    - Not familiar with emergencies
    - Afraid of liability

- Associated with increased risk for diversions

Air Ambulance Operator Perspective

- **Significant variety globally** in type of aircraft, operation and environment
- **No universal standard for aviation operators** performing air ambulance operations - some countries have specific requirements
- **No alignment in requirement** – in some jurisdictions these fall under "Passenger" operations, in others additional specifications are mandated
- Challenge to those operating networks in **identifying and comparing operators** across jurisdiction

(Inter)national Operations – Structural Challenges

- **Civil aviation standards vary** between jurisdictions, creating hurdles in international transfer
- **Differing regulations** include:
  - Crew Duty Time
  - Crew status of medical team
  - Landing/Overflight permit requirements for air ambulance flights
- Air ambulance operations often required to fly **into high-risk aviation environments**, sometimes against general CAA advice.

Pandemic Learnings and Developments

- **Limited guidance** initially available to Civil Aviation Authorities and operators in regards to **best practice for air crew, airport operation and port authority control**
- Increased requirement for **mass-movement of medical patients**, including medicalisation of wide-body aircraft
- Challenges in managing **engineering and safety approvals** for multiple stretcher installations, dangerous goods carriage, and infection control.
- Dramatic increase in use of **air ambulance equipment** such as isolation chambers – varying **approval** processes for installation and usage, as well as manufacture

Challenges from a regulatory perspective

- Legalization
- Approval Requirements
- Lack of globally accepted definitions and standards
- Medical Personnel Qualifications
- Transport of Communicable Disease Patients
- Special Medical Equipment

Key take-aways

- **Minimum safety standards are needed for airframes and equipment** to reduce the risk of unsafe ad hoc air ambulance missions
- **Fatigue Risk Management Systems** should be applied to operational and medical personnel to manage fatigue
- **Authorizations and designations for 'medevac' operations** should be common globally.

ANW Conclusions

a) In the panel the **challenges and potential solutions to manage medical emergencies on-board commercial aircraft** were discussed, which included the adaptation of training tools and the use of advancements in medical and communications technology.

b) Air ambulance operators discussed **logistical and operational challenges** in general, due to the absence of globally harmonized medical flight and air ambulance standards, as well as lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

c) It was agreed that there is a need to **revise the guidance** for the aviation sector with regards to providing **emergency medical care on board** or **transporting patients to medical facilities**, either via emergency or scheduled air transport.


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