



ICAO

*International Civil Aviation Organization***Ninth Meeting of the Aerodromes Operations and Planning Sub-Group (AOP/SG/9)***Bangkok, Thailand, 30 June to 4 July 2025*

Agenda Item 5: State's/Aerodrome Operator's update and best practices**DISABLED AIRCRAFT REMOVAL**

(Presented by Japan)

SUMMARY

This paper presents the importance of clarifying the roles of aircraft operators and airport operators in the disabled aircraft removal plan stipulated in Annex 14 to resume airport operation in the event of occurrence of disabled aircraft which results in closure of the runway and introduces Japan's efforts in this area.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 With increasing demand for air travel, once an event occurs such as disabled aircraft happened, it could result in closure of the runway or even closure of the entire airport, as a result it would affect airport users or other aircraft operators.

1.2 To resume airport operations quickly, it is important to implement necessary plans in coordination with relevant parties at the airport (aircraft operators, airport operator, accident investigation authority, etc.) prior to the occurrence of an incident and to promptly remove the disabled aircraft when the incident occurs.

1.3 In this regard, the 229th session of the ICAO Air Navigation Commission discussed the amendment of the SARPs regarding the removal of disabled aircraft, and it was indicated that the main purpose of the proposed provisions in Annex 14 Volume I and PANS-Aerodromes (Doc 9981) is to support the establishment of disabled aircraft removal plans and to coordinate actions among all airport stakeholders.

1.4 In addition to the above, the proposed amendment of the SARPs would provide for responsibilities related to the removal of disabled aircraft, training for the removal of disabled aircraft, and other matters.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 In Japan, in 2021, a runway was closed at Niigata Airport for approximately seven hours due to disabled aircraft, resulting in the cancellation of 18 flights including scheduled flights and affecting many airport users.

2.2 In Japan, following several incidents of disabled aircraft, a study group was established by aircraft operators, airport operators, and the Civil Aviation Bureau for early recovery. Based on the discussion in the study group, the domestic standards were revised and guidance was prepared to strengthen the measures related to the removal of disabled aircraft.

2.3 The main points of the revision of the domestic standards are to review the following seven points.

- Defines the types of disabled aircraft removal work into three categories (Aircraft debogging, Aircraft recovery, Aircraft salvage) according to the severity of the incident, and regulates that preparation and removal operations shall be carried out according to the above categories.
- Regulates that the airport operator shall clarify the list of equipment that can be provided and the removal capability of airport, and clearly indicate this information to the aircraft operator.
- Regulates that the aircraft operator be required to submit an “Removal disabled aircraft plan” before operating the aircraft.
- The aircraft operator is responsible for removing the disabled aircraft basically, but the airport operator may remove the disabled aircraft by themselves if it is determined that the existing disabled aircraft will have a significant impact on airport operations. So, for that it also regulates that agreement form for removing the disabled aircraft must be submitted to airport operator in advance, and that a cooperative implementation structure as each airport for removing disabled aircraft shall be established.
- Regulates that the airport operator shall promptly inform aircraft operators and other stakeholders of the status of runway closures, etc., and the prospects for resumed operations.
- Regulates that procedures be prepared in advance so that the relationship between the location of the incident and the surface that needs to be secured for the continuation of operations can be quickly determined.
- Regulates that the preparation status for the disabled aircraft removal shall be checked and disabled aircraft removal training shall be carried out at least once a year.

2.4 The above domestic standards are to be applied by October 1, 2025, and each airport in Japan is in the process of establishing an implementation structure and preparing a removal of disabled aircraft plan.

2.5 In addition, recovery tools will be deployed at some airports in Japan in preparation for cases when airport operators need to assist in removal of the disabled aircraft. In March 2025, a removal training was conducted at Kagoshima Airport using the actual aircraft (Cirrus SR22) and the recovery tools.

2.6 This recovery tools which can be placed under the aircraft landing gears allow horizontal movement of aircraft in the event of excursions from the movement area or aircraft stopped in areas with few steps away from the paved areas caused by flat tires or any gear trouble. It allows the fastest and safest removal of the disabled aircraft without requiring the time-consuming process of jacking up or changing tires and so on, contributing to reduced runway closure time.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper;
- b) encourage member States to collaborate by sharing and exchanging their best practices and challenges encountered in the removal of the disabled aircraft procedures; and
- c) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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