



ICAO

*International Civil Aviation Organization*

**Eleventh Meeting of the ICAO Asia/Pacific Search and Rescue  
Workgroup (APSAR/WG/11)**

Bangkok, Thailand, 5 – 8 May 2026

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**Agenda Item 4: Asia/Pacific and Inter-regional SAR Planning, Coordination and Cooperation**

**EXTENDED DIVERSION TIME OPERATIONS**

(Presented by United States)

**SUMMARY**

This paper presents a brief overview of “extended diversion time of operations” and possible benefits for SAR and emergency response operations.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Interagency discussions in the United States have resulted in some clearer understanding as to certain key airports in the Indo-Pacific for potential roles in extended diversion time of operations and emergency response operations in general. Focus is on the airports in more remote parts of the Indo-Pacific region. Such information may be of use to States and territories across the Asia/Pacific region.

**2. DISCUSSION**

2.1 The term Extended Diversion Time Operations (EDTO) has been in use for the last several years, but its original creation used different wording which may still be used by other aviation authorities. EDTO is the generally accepted terminology, but it is one of three ways authorities may speak:

- a) ICAO definition of EDTO: any operation by an aeroplane with two or more turbine engines where the diversion time to an en-route alternate aerodrome is greater than the threshold time established by the State of the Operator;
- b) Extended Range Operations (ETOPS): “Extended Operations” generally defined as “a regulatory safety framework that permits aircraft, particularly twin-engine aircraft, to operate long-distance routes far from an adequate diversion airport while meeting strict aircraft reliability, maintenance, and crew training standards to ensure a high level of safety”; and
- c) ETOPS: Extended-range Twin-engine Operational Performance Standards.

2.2 Discussion in this document is on EDTO with the understanding that the intent of all three terms is to ensure that a twin-engine aircraft can safely fly to a suitable alternate airport with only one engine operating. ICAO replaced the term ETOPS with EDTO to better reflect the broader scope of the regulations, which now apply to aeroplanes with two or more turbine engines.

2.3 ICAO Annex 6, *Operation of Aircraft, Part I*, Section 4.7.2, provides details on the requirements for EDTO. It is the responsibility of the operator and the State regulator of the operator to determine which are appropriate en-route alternate aerodromes. From a search and rescue (SAR) perspective, an EDTO en-route alternate aerodrome for an in-flight emergency could be the scene for a SAR response, and possibly also serve as a landing field for response to other types of emergencies. These landing sites should also be available for SAR and emergency response operations by other SAR services.

2.4 The United States Coast Guard routinely responds to SAR and disaster incidents within the extensive United States SAR regions across the Central and South Pacific Ocean and, when able, to requests from many other States and territories. Airports in remote regions such as American Samoa, Guam, Midway Island, Wake Island and many of the developing Pacific Island States and territories, are regularly used by United States Coast Guard aircraft as deployment sites to support SAR and emergency response. Also used for aircraft deployments are the capitol cities of the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Palau.

2.5 EDTO designated airports, as determined by the operator and its State regulator, provide key services to airlines based on their unique locations. EDTO airports are critical to the safety of long-range flights across the Pacific if an in-flight emergency were to occur far from a fully developed aerodrome. While there is no all-inclusive list of such airports, the table below is a partial list of airports that the United States Coast Guard would currently consider as an EDTO alternate site and for use in SAR and emergency response operations:

<b>Territory</b>	<b>Airport</b>
Midway Atoll	MDY
Wake Island	AWK
Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands	KWA
Shemya Island, Alaska	SYA
King Salmon, Alaska	AKN
Kuai, Hawaii	BKH
Enewetak Island, Marshall Islands	PKMA

### **3. ACTION BY THE MEETING**

3.1 The meeting is invited to note the information contained in this paper.

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