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Ensuring accident victims and their families are
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Montréal, 16 Oct 2018

ICAO Policy on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and Their Families



Steve Creamer
Director, Air Navigation Bureau
International Civil Aviation Organization

Montréal, 16 Oct 2018





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Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims Policy Task Force - AVPTF -

Established on 16 March 2012



AVPTF

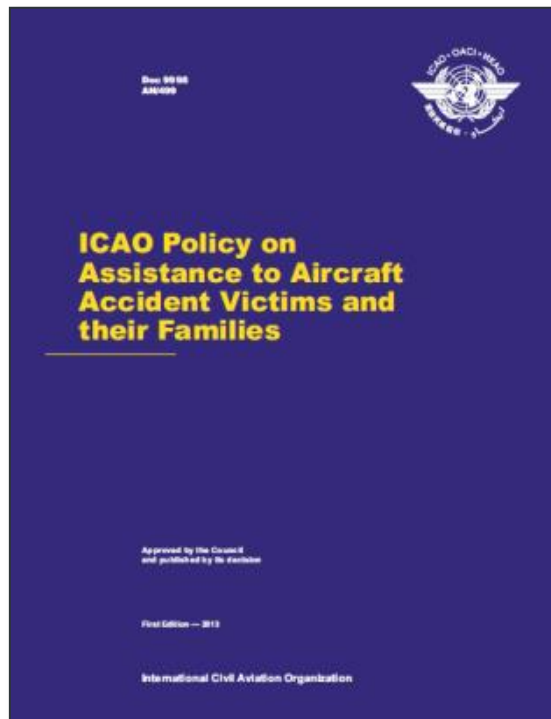
Terms of Reference

Scope: The AVPTF to develop an ICAO policy document for the provision of assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families.

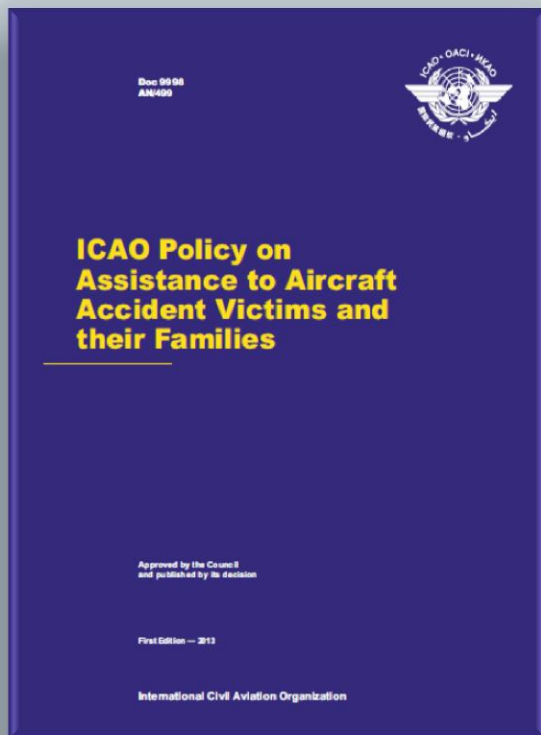
Deliverable: The AVPTF to produce an ICAO policy document, to be approved by the Council, by the end of February 2013.

Membership: States with experience on family assistance and representatives from the Air Crash Victims Families Group (ACVFG). Other States and international organizations to ensure adequate geographical representation.

Principal references: Annex 13 ; *Assembly Resolutions*, notably Resolution A32-7; and *Guidance on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families* (Circ 285).



- **ICAO Policy on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families**
 - Doc 9998 – First edition 2013



Foreword

Section I. General

Section II. ICAO Policy

- State Readiness
- Family Assistance Plan
- Timeliness of Family Assistance
- Family Assistance Providers

Government

- State of Occurrence
- Aircraft Accident Investigation Authority
- Civil Aviation Authority

Non-government Organizations

- Aircraft Operator/Airline
- Airport Operator
- Third Parties
- Family Associations

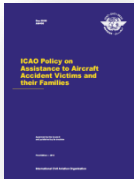
Appendix A – Glossary of terms



ICAO Policy State readiness

The Council recommends that States:

- a) reaffirm their commitment to ensure that adequate and sufficient assistance is provided to aircraft accident victims and their families;
- b) establish legislation, regulations and/or policies addressing family assistance plans to ensure that family assistance providers have the necessary financial, personnel, and equipment resources, and that systems are available at short notice to provide assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families in a timely manner;
- c) ensure that their family assistance plans consider the following factors: recipients of family assistance; types of family assistance to be provided; when family assistance should be provided; family assistance providers; periodic review and exercise of the plan; and enactment of legislation, regulations and/or policies necessary to implement the plan;
- d) establish legislation, regulations and/or policies required to implement effective coordination and control of the efforts to provide the required family assistance;
- e) require that air operators implement family assistance plans, and ensure that these plans are exercised regularly, supervised and audited as necessary;
- f) require that airport operators implement family assistance plans, which can be part of their Airport Emergency Plans, in coordination with air operators, and ensure that these plans are exercised regularly, supervised and audited as necessary; and
- g) require air operators to have proper arrangements with airports in which they operate, so as to facilitate the provision of family assistance as required.



Family assistance plan

2.4 A detailed, well-considered plan that is periodically exercised is critical to the provision of family assistance. The need to provide such assistance may occur with little or no warning, requiring an immediate response, and may involve large numbers of trained personnel, significant expense and dedicated resources.

2.5 The Council recommends that a family assistance plan should consider the following factors:

- a) recipients of family assistance;
- b) types of family assistance to be provided;
- c) when family assistance should be provided;
- d) family assistance providers;
- e) periodic review and exercise of the plan; and
- f) enactment of legislation, regulations and /or policies necessary to implement the plan.

2.6 States should count on specific planning and resources from other States, air operators, airport operators, third parties (such as non-governmental aid agencies and commercial companies), and family associations. The Council recommends that States establish Memoranda of Understanding, agreements and/or contracts with departments, agencies, associations, organizations and other States that could provide support for the development, preparation and implementation of the plan.



Timeliness of family assistance

2.7 Following an aircraft accident, the most immediate form of information required is the confirmation of whether or not the person about whom a family is concerned was involved in the accident. The ability to provide such information is dependent upon the availability of an accurate passenger manifest with sufficient detail for positive confirmation of each passenger's identity.

2.8 Some States have privacy rules and regulations protecting the identities of accident victims and their families. As a consequence, delays in providing passenger manifests may adversely affect the authorities responsible for coordinating and providing family assistance.

2.9 The Council recommends that States consider legislation, regulations and/or policies that would enable the entities responsible for providing family assistance to have access to relevant and appropriate information for the purposes of providing timely assistance.



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Family assistance providers

2.10 There are five main groups involved in providing family assistance:

- a) the government of the State of Occurrence and other States involved in the occurrence;
- b) the air operators;
- c) the airport operators;
- d) third parties (e.g. non-governmental aid agencies, commercial companies); and
- e) family associations, when required.

Note.— Each group has different resources and responsibilities to the family assistance efforts. The work of these groups should be synchronized and well-coordinated in order to have an effective family assistance response.

2.11 The Council recommends that States, as part of the coordination process established in their family assistance plans, facilitate the cooperation among the different family assistance providers.



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Government

State of occurrence

2.12 The Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) regarding facilitation-related matters for family assistance are specified in ICAO Annex 9, Chapter 8, Section I, *Assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families*. Section I specifies the State of Occurrence as being responsible for these SARPs. Other States involved in the occurrence may also share these responsibilities.

2.13 The Council recommends that States designate and specify in their regulations and/or policies a coordinator/coordinating agency to ensure that the various family assistance providers work in an efficient and coordinated manner so as to provide the most appropriate and timely assistance possible. The coordinator/coordinating agency may also be the point of contact between the families, the government agencies and non-government organizations.



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Aircraft accident investigation authority

2.14 The Council emphasizes that the sole objective of an aircraft accident investigation, as defined in Annex 13 — *Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation*, is the prevention of accidents and incidents, not the apportionment of blame or liability, and is separate from the provision of family assistance. However, the accident investigation authority has a responsibility to provide relevant, timely and validated information to the families and the accident survivors regarding the progress of the investigation, provided that it does not compromise the objective of the investigation.

2.15 To ensure the timeliness of the release of validated information to accident victims and their families, **the Council recommends that the accident investigation authority, or other appropriate authority, consider appointing a liaison person as a focal point to ensure effective communications with other providers of family assistance, and to coordinate visits to the accident site by the families and survivors when required, and when access is practicable.**



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Civil Aviation Authority

2.16 The civil aviation authority is usually responsible for the regulation, certification and oversight of the aviation industry. In some States, the civil aviation authority issues regulations and/or policies mandating that air operators and airport operators have family assistance plans.

2.17 The Council recommends that civil aviation authorities or other appropriate authorities establish legislation, regulations and/or policies to require that air operators and airport operators have family assistance plans and resources to provide timely and effective assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families. Such plans should be supervised, exercised and audited as necessary.



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Non-government organizations

Air operator

2.18 The air operator is in the best position to develop and maintain an accurate passenger manifest to facilitate the identification of those who may be involved in an aircraft accident. The air operator is also in the best position to notify the families of accident victims, and to provide the passenger manifest to other authorities involved in providing family assistance.

2.19 The Council recommends that States ensure that air operators have their family assistance plans reviewed, exercised and updated periodically to provide timely and effective assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families.



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Non-government organizations

Airport operator

2.20 Because airports are often where families and friends first gather to receive information regarding an accident, airports need to have plans to provide assistance to accident victims and their families, with focus on immediate care and support following an accident. Such plans are to be implemented in coordination with air operators so as to facilitate harmonization of the assistance to be provided. To this end, the Council acknowledges that, following an accident, all airports associated with the operation may need to be involved in the provision of family assistance including the airport of departure, destination airport and alternate airports.

2.21 The Council recommends that States ensure that airport operators have their family assistance plans reviewed, exercised and updated periodically to provide timely and effective assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families.



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Non-government organizations

Third parties

2.22 The Council recommends that States, air operators and airport operators consider the experience and services of third parties in the development of family assistance plans, such as:

a) aid agencies with extensive experience in dealing with families and disaster survivors, and which are often able to provide services, such as crisis counselling and support for the families of accident victims; and

b) specialty commercial companies that can assist in the provision of family assistance, such as in handling calls from family members, providing on-scene family assistance coordination, and managing the identification, custody and return of personal effects.



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Non-government organizations

Family associations

2.23 The Council acknowledges that family associations provide assistance to their members in various forms and, in some cases, have provided assistance to the families of victims of other aircraft accidents. Family associations can offer unique first-hand experience and insight regarding the provision of family assistance and can serve as interlocutors regarding the handling of certain family assistance issues.

2.24 The Council recommends that States, during the development of their family assistance plans, take in due account the experience and support that family associations can provide.

2.25 The Council further recommends that States consider supporting the establishment of family associations, as necessary.



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(SAM) Office
Lima

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Headquarters
Montréal

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Central African
(WACAF) Office
Dakar

European and
North Atlantic
(EUR/NAT) Office
Paris

Middle East
(MID) Office
Cairo

Eastern and
Southern African
(ESAF) Office
Nairobi

Asia and Pacific
(APAC) Sub-office
Beijing

Asia and Pacific
(APAC) Office
Bangkok



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