Aerodrome Safety Standards Department

Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal

Safety Advisory Circular

SAC No.: 2020- 08/01

Issued: 09August, 2020

Subject： Preparation of Aerodromes to Resume Operations

Note: This c i r c u l a r is issued in the context to provide guidance to allow the return to normal operations during COVID-19 Pandemic

Ref. Publications:

 Guidance to Airlines, Airports and Ground Services for Operations during COVID-19 dated 03 June, 2020 Rev. 01, 01 July, 2020.

Applicability:

Aerodrome operators, air navigation service providers and responsible delegated authorities.
Individual Airport Operator may prepare and implement their own guidelines/SOP that should adhere to but not limited to the recommendations as furnished by this circular.

Description:

Aerodromes have been forced to scale down or suspend their operations due to various restrictions imposed upon aviation sector as well as the inevitable limitations emerged amid unprecedented outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. Majority of flights have been suspended as a result. Aerodrome systems of many airports such as airfield lighting and radio navigation aids may have been switched off and runway, taxiways, apron may not be functional. The inspections and maintenance of aerodrome facilities may not have been performed as per schedule. A number of staff may have gone redundant or may not have completed the required training, thereby limiting the capability of aerodrome to cope with increasing traffic. The aerodrome operators, under their safety management system, should, therefore, establish a plan that ensures the safe and gradual return to operations.

The safety concern described in this Circular is intended only to improve the existing state of aerodrome for safer operation and shall not be considered an unsafe condition that would warrant Safety of aircraft operation.

Recommendation(s):

The following recommendations aim to support the safe operation of an aircraft at the aerodrome, and should be considered along with any other instructions related to health and security issues as well as the provisions of ground handling services.

Aerodrome operators are responsible for ensuring the safety of operations at the aerodromes. This should be done in close cooperation and coordination with the air navigation service providers, air operators, ground handling service providers under the supervision of the responsible delegated authorities. While doing so, it is imperative to take into consideration the instructions of the government health authorities as well.

In order to return to normal operations, aerodrome operators should prepare a plan that should include but not limited to the followings:

1. **The paved and unpaved surfaces**

   1.1 Check general cleanliness, presence of foreign object debris (FOD) and any signs of damage to the pavement surface which could pose a risk to the aircraft operations;

   1.2 Check leakages and depressions due to long-term parked aircraft;

   1.3 Check Drainage systems and storm water collection systems, in order to ensure that they are unobstructed.

2. **Electrical power supply systems**

   2.1 Check the status of the primary and secondary power supply systems, with special attention to those supporting the approach, runway and taxiway lighting, apron floodlighting, visual docking guidance systems, non-visual aids, Meteorology (MET) equipment, Air Traffic Services (ATS) installations (e.g. the air traffic control or aerodrome flight information services tower), rescue and firefighting station and every alerting and communication system;

   2.2 Complete the scheduled maintenance, if not performed,

3. **Non-visual aids for navigation**

   3.1 Check the status of non-visual aids for navigation, especially of those which were not in use during the suspension period;

   3.2 Check the issuance of Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) regarding the status of the non-visual aids;

   3.3 Check the condition, with height in particular, of grass and other vegetation around the non-visual aids.

4. **Visual aids for navigation**

   4.1 Check the status of all lights, markings and signs, particularly when the frequency of inspections has been reduced. Any inspection reports available should be reviewed and open items should be closed;

   4.2 Check to ensure that lights, signs and markings are not obstructed by vegetation;

   4.3 Confirm if the regular checks and the calibration of Precision Approach Path Indicators (PAPI) have been conducted as per schedule and, if not so, a new calibration should be arranged before restoring operations;

   4.4 Check the status of the obstacle lights at the aerodrome and replace the failed lights, if found any.

5. Rescue and firefighting

5.1 Check the status of rescue and firefighting equipment and vehicles.

5.2 Check to ensure the availability of extinguishing agents appropriate to the rescue and firefighting level of protection;

5.3 The maintenance of rescue and firefighting vehicles should be reviewed. Any scheduled maintenance that has not been performed should be completed as soon as possible;

5.4 Special attention should be given to the fire stations that were not in use during the suspension period;

5.5 Communication and alerting systems should be checked for proper functioning;

5.6 The status of the emergency access roads to the active runway(s) should be checked and special attention should be given to ensure that they have unobstructed access, particularly from parked aircraft;

5.7 Ensure the availability of staffing level appropriate to the rescue and firefighting level of protection. The rescue and firefighting level of protection should be adjusted to the most demanding aircraft in terms of rescue and firefighting aerodrome category. In this case, the information should be promulgated via NOTAM;

5.8 Staff should be advised to always follow local rules for physical distancing in the changing and social rooms. The safe distance norm should also be followed during off-duty periods so that the transmission of the contagion can be warded off thereby potentially setting off a spreading event that could affect the Rescue and Fire Fighting Services (RFFS) category.

6. Obstacle Limitation Surfaces and its management

6.1 The obstacles in the aerodrome's surrounding should be reviewed. The check should focus on the lighting and marking of the authorized obstacles as well as the emergence of new structures. Any unauthorized obstacles should be brought to the attention and removed without delay;

6.2 Obstacle Free Zone(s), when established, should be thoroughly examined;

6.3 Obstacle protection surfaces of visual approach slope indicator systems (VASIS/PAPI) should be checked for possible infringements;

6.4 ATS line of sight should be unobstructed, especially for the active runway(s) and taxiway(s) which are used for aircraft taxiing.

7. Wildlife hazard management

7.1 The status of vegetation, habitat and land use management at the aerodrome should be checked;

7.2 In the case of increased bird activity at and around the aerodrome, a NOTAM should be issued to advise caution;

7.3 The status of wildlife activity reporting should be checked. The latest available reports should be reviewed and special focus should be given to areas which are known for wildlife activity;

7.4 The status of the aerodrome fences should be checked. Fences should be repaired, when necessary;

7.5 Availability and functioning of repellent systems should be checked;

7.6 Aircraft and other infrastructure should be checked for possible nesting due to inactivity. Inform aircraft operators when wildlife activities are observed close to parked aircraft;

7.7 Regular monitoring of wildlife activities should commence as soon as possible;

7.8 Intensive use of active wildlife control methods to disperse hazardous wildlife species from the aerodrome should be adopted before and right after the restart;

7.9 A comparative analysis of wildlife monitoring and control data of all possible and confirmed wildlife strikes collected before and during the lockdown should be performed in order to identify possible new wildlife hazards raised during the lockdown.

8. Apron management

8.1 The effective functioning of Airplane ladder, visual docking guidance systems, if applicable, and FOD management should be checked;

8.2 Depending on the size of the aerodrome and the expected traffic, a list of available aircraft stands and a stand allocation plan should be prepared. The plan should be communicated to the air traffic services and apron management service, if applicable, as well as to ground handling service providers.

9. Aeronautical information management

9.1 Any NOTAMS/publications in regard to restrictions to aircraft operations or closure (partial or full) of the aerodrome should be reviewed and, if required, should be amended or cancelled;

9.2 Any new restrictions, non-availability of infrastructure, services such as provision of ground handling services, fuel, obstacles and new procedures that may have an impact on flight

operations should be published via NOTAM without delay.

10. Aerodrome emergency plan

10.1 Check if equipment and facilities required for emergencies are available and functioning;

10.2 Check to ensure that participating organizations are available and are capable to support in case of emergency;

10.3 Table top emergency exercises should be conducted in case partial or full-scale emergency exercises have been postponed or cancelled during suspension period. However, it is imperative that the aerodrome operator should conduct the planned emergency exercises as soon as possible in coordination with the responsible delegated authority.

11. Airside works

11.1 Work plans should be reviewed and revised accordingly and communicated to the contractors and aerodrome personnel;

11.2 Ensure that Construction or maintenance work sites are appropriately marked and lighted; For ongoing changes or when resuming construction works, it should be ensured that hypothesis and mitigating measures are still relevant and implemented;

11.3 NOTAMs, Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) Supplements and amendments related to airside works should be validated and updated if necessary.

12. Vehicle/equipment readiness

12.1 All the vehicles and equipment operating on the movement area, especially those which have not been used for an extensive period of time, should be maintained and ready to function properly;

12.2 Communication systems should be checked to ensure its proper functioning.

13. Disabled aircraft removal plan

13.1 The information published in the AIP should be reviewed and updated as necessary;

13.2 The disabled aircraft removal plan, the availability of equipment, personnel and any other arrangements should be reviewed.

14. Availability and competence of personnel

14.1 Availability of a sufficient number of personnel should be ensured;

14.2 Training records should be reviewed and, if necessary, refresher trainings should be conducted. E-Learning training courses may be used to facilitate theoretical training and physical distancing;

14.3 The content of the aerodrome manual, particularly all the procedures contained therein, should be reviewed;

14.4 Personnel should be briefed on the new or changed procedures, possible changes to the infrastructure, that have taken place during the suspension period and they should be familiarized of the new working environment.

15. Coordination and collaboration

A. Stakeholder preparedness:

15.A.1 The availability of staff and equipment should be ensured by the ground handling service providers;

15.A.2 Specific procedures should be communicated in advance and a coordination team should be established to address issues that may emerge;

15.A.3 It should be ensured that fuel suppliers have adequately trained staff and equipment to refuel the aircraft. Fuel bowsers should be checked to mitigate the risk of fuel contamination.

B. Air Traffic Services and Meteorology:

15.B.1 Coordination should be performed with air traffic services to ensure the readiness of aerodrome for return to operations and to agree upon any operational restrictions;

15.B.2 Coordination should be performed with MET office to ensure the availability of meteorological services.

Contact(s):

For further information, contact Aerodromes Safety Standards Department, CAAN

E-mail: dass@caanepal.gov.np.