

# Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia

## ADVISORY INFORMATION 3/2020



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## **GUIDANCE FOR FLIGHT CREW RETURNING TO FLYING** **DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

### **1 Introduction**

As the aviation industry struggle with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic effects, for many flight crews, the opportunity to be at the control and flying the aircraft again is something that they look forward to and are always excited about. However, returning to the skies after a long break can be challenging and may impose safety risks to the flight operations if no strategies and mitigation measures are put in place. These operational challenges for the flight crew must be addressed and managed properly to ensure that flying can remain safe for all stakeholders, the operators, the flight crews, the passengers and everyone else involved in this industry.

The CAAM is aware and fully understands the challenges that the industry is facing and currently working our best to navigate through this crisis and address the needs of all the industry stakeholders. This advisory information is intended to provide guidance and advice to all flight crew on the health issue and measures to be taken in order to resume flying operations during this challenging time.

### **2 Safety Challenges**

The COVID-19 has triggered many challenges for the aviation industry. These challenges may impose potential risks to flight operations. Below are some examples of the challenges:

- a) health risk and the possibility of being infected with the virus;
- b) operating with new public health requirements e.g. wearing masks and personal protective equipment (PPE);
- c) human performance effect due to flight crew mental state associated with possible loss of job and other personal matters;
- d) flight crew not able to maintain license validity and currency requirements;
- e) decrease flying skills after being inactive for a period of time;
- f) technical issues as a result of aircraft being out of service for a long period;
- g) a significant drop in passenger loads;
- h) changes to the normal operations/kind of flight undertaken (e.g. carrying cargo in passenger aircraft, flying almost empty aircraft, etc.); and
- i) adapting to operations under changed regulatory requirements (exemption).

The list is non-exhaustive. It shows that the industry is currently facing an unimaginable and unprecedented amount of challenges to continue its operation. To manage these challenges, we require unprecedented measures and options as well.

### **3 Health information and guidance for flight crew**

The Malaysian Ministry of Health (MOH) has provided many useful resources on the COVID-19 health issues in general and is the main authority in this matter. Flight crews are expected to follow the guidelines and precautions related to COVID-19 by the MOH. This guidance is served as supplementary information to the flight crew as awareness and consideration when carrying out flying duties.

- a) be aware of your state of health. If you are unwell and showing symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath or other symptoms of COVID-19, please get medical attention and do not report for duty;
- b) be aware of your state of wellbeing. The World Health Organization defines wellbeing as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'. Get proper sleep, diet and exercise. Have a positive attitude towards life and manage stress well. Family, friends and colleague are your support system and will always be there to help;
- c) If you are required to be quarantined after any flying duty, please observed it strictly; and
- d) ensure that the usage of face mask or PPE does not interfere with the safe operations of the flight.

## **4 Safety tips and advice for flight crew returning to flying**

Below are some tips and advice to help flight crew return to flying safely. This may not be applicable to everyone but provide a starting point for flight crew as they resume flying duties:

### **4.1 Pre-flight**

- a) ensure that your license is valid. If you are exercising the exemption, ensure that you understand which exemption is applicable and the requirements are met;
- b) do a thorough preflight documentations review and pay extra attention to weather conditions, relevant NOTAMS and other information that may be affecting the flight;
- c) do a thorough inspection of the aircraft, pay extra attention during external and internal checks of the aircraft; and
- d) do a proper pre-flight briefing and plan for contingencies – engine failures, unfavorable weather conditions, surrounding terrain, etc.

### **4.2 During the flight**

- a) do not deviate from the standard operating procedures;
- b) be aware of the aircraft characteristics when flying with light loads;
- c) use the checklist, it will help you to remember the vital tasks that can be easily missed;
- d) always be mentally prepared for unexpected events or technical failures;
- e) increase your situational awareness. Know what has happened, what is happening and what will happen;
- f) consider more frequent track shortening by air traffic controller due to less aircraft flying in the airspace;
- g) if you become unstabilized during the approach, keep in mind that go-around or aborted landing is always an option. Attempt another approach for a safe landing. Consider this, by going around you'll gain extra flying hours;
- h) ensure social distancing is observed in the flight deck or in the cabin; and
- i) limit non-essential interaction with flight attendant or passenger.

### **4.3 Post-flight**

- a) ensure to annotate any aircraft defect in the maintenance log; and
- b) when leaving the flight deck, ensure all items are stowed, personal items removed and that the flight deck is clean for the use of the next flight crew.

## 5 Summary

In summary, with awareness and mitigation measures in place, taking the aircraft flying again during this unprecedented time can be as safe as always before. Flight crews are reminded to be vigilant and ensure that safety is of utmost importance in carrying-out flying duties.



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