

specifies the amount of agent for fire extinguishment and the number of vehicles to deliver the agent proportionate to the size of the largest airplane using the airport. In the international Standards of ICAO, the length and width of the aircraft fuselage determines the "RFF Category". An allowance for reducing the index/category is provided in the event that the aircraft only uses the airport infrequently *i.e.*, less than 700 movements in the busiest consecutive three months with the airplane in the highest category. This is termed a remission factor. Even though frequency of operations may allow a reduction of service levels by 1 Category, this reduction will no longer be allowed after January 2005 under the ICAO Standards. ICAO RFF category range from 1 to 10. As an example, the ICAO category of RFF 4, which is nearly equivalent to Index A in part 139, provides at least 1 firefighter and 1 vehicle with the ability for immediate fire suppression or ground assistance to occupants.

Contradicting the arguments of those who support RFF at enroute alternates, some have stated that based on the last sixteen years of ETOPS operations with well over 2.5 million ETOPS flights around the world, there is no record of a single incident where a twin on an ETOPS phase of flight with a mechanical event diverted to an ETOPS alternate and the landing resulted in an unanticipated accident, such as a runway overrun and thus became catastrophic, and required the RFF services. It was further argued that the probability of an ETOPS flight diverting on the ETOPS portion of the flight, landing at an ETOPS alternate, resulting in an accident or a catastrophic situation is very remote, and need not be considered. However, some have pointed out that the fact that an event has not happened does not mean it will never happen, and industry needs to be proactive and provide a level of safety as a margin, should the situation arise.

Some have pointed out that requiring high levels of RFF protection for the enroute alternate airports would either severely limit the selection of diversion airports necessitating longer divert times, or demand the communities supporting these enroute alternate airports increase their level of emergency service beyond that currently available. However, it can be argued that for airplanes on long diversions a pad may need to be built in so that a minimum level of RFF capability is assured at the time of landing.

Even though currently not required by part 139, the FAA considers it very

desirable to have some minimum level of RFF protection at the ETOPS alternates. Taking into account the various opinions expressed in the ARAC recommendations, the FAA proposes to establish a minimum RFF of 4 for ETOPS operations below 180 minutes, and a minimum RFF of 7 for diversion times greater than 180 minutes. This reflects the RFF requirements stated in FAA Order 8400.10, Flight Standards Handbook Bulletins for Air Transportation, HBAAT 99-15 titled Level of Rescue and Fire Fighting Services (RFFS) for ETOPS En Route Alternates, and the 207-Minute ETOPS Policy.

Similar to the allowance contained in HBAAT 99-15, the proposed regulation allows for an off airport response time of thirty minutes, however, the required equipment must be available on-scene for the arrival of the diverting airplane and should remain for as long as their services are needed. In contrast to a destination or departure airport, the diversion airport has time to muster community emergency service assets to provide the necessary emergency response following notification of the aircraft diversion. This provision for the use of off-airport emergency services necessitates that a robust communications link must be established in order to provide sufficient time to muster the necessary RFF personnel and equipment. Further, local community emergency services support of required RFF response in providing equipment and personnel is considered prudent.

In all cases the certificate holder must ensure that the flight crews are provided current information (in plain language) concerning the RFF capability for those airports designated as alternate airports

Proposed New Section 121.122 Communication Facilities

The FAA proposes to add a communication facilities requirement for supplemental operators. This section would mirror section 121.99, which applies to flag and domestic operators.

Explanation

The FAA believes it is necessary to create comparable communication requirement for supplemental operators to ensure consistency among part 121 operations. To this end, the FAA proposes communication requirements similar to those in section 121.99. For example, paragraph 121.122(a) is based on the existing paragraph 121.99(a), which is the basic communication requirement for domestic and flag operators. Similarly paragraphs 121.122(b) and (c) are based on the

proposed sections 121.99(c) and (d) respectively which would establish communication requirements for ETOPS. See discussion above for 121.99(c) and (d) for the rationale of ETOPS communication requirements.

Proposed New Paragraph 121.135(b)(10) Contents

Add a new 14 CFR 121.135(b)(10) to require performance data to support ETOPS.

Explanation

The FAA proposes to insert a new requirement for performance data in the manual required by this section to support ETOPS as paragraph (b)(10), and to renumber existing paragraphs 121.135(b)(10) through (24) to new paragraphs 121.135(b)(11) through (25). Since ETOPS are conducted under a special authorization, there is an additional performance data requirement to support these operations. The flight crew and dispatchers should have available the engine inoperative and cabin depressurization cruise data used by the certificate holder to plan flights and operate under ETOPS.

Proposed New Paragraph 121.135(b)(26) Contents (New)

Add paragraph 121.135(b)(26) to require a passenger recovery plan for flag and supplemental operations in the certificate holder's manual.

Explanation

The FAA proposes to add paragraph 121.135(b)(24) to require a passenger recovery plan for flag and supplemental operations in the certificate holder's manual. The FAA introduced the requirement for an airline to develop and maintain a passenger recovery plan for flights authorized in the North Pole area of operation by policy letter in March 2001.

It is incumbent that a carrier account for contingencies when diversions occur to airports not normally served by the carrier. When a diversion occurs in an area where the carrier has a substantial operational infrastructure, (that is, a carrier serves many destinations in Europe but is forced by operational circumstances to divert to an airport not served by the carrier but within the region) that diversion plan becomes a simple matter of describing how the carrier's assets within the region can supply immediate logistical support to the diversion aircraft. This can be called a regional passenger recovery plan applicable to a stated geographical area.

However, a carrier with an extensive route system extending over remote areas has a responsibility to devise a