ICAO New Language Requirements Implementation

On 5 March 2003, the Council of ICAO adopted the Standards and Recommended Practices related to language provisions recommended by the Proficiency Requirements In Common English Study Group (PRICE SG). The provisions included several new standards for pilots, controllers, air traffic service providers and airlines. These provisions will become applicable on 5 March 2008.

During the September of 2007 ICAO Assembly, several States sought to postpone the applicability date. The Assembly of ICAO adopted a resolution which will allow States that will not be compliant by the applicability date until 5 March 2011 to become compliant. However, this additional time will be only be allowed provided that the non-compliant States make available to ICAO and all other Contracting States an implementation plan for language proficiency requirements.

This plan should be posted on the ICAO website no later than 5 March 2008. The intent of the implementation plan is to provide a means of communicating the steps that States will take to meet the language proficiency requirements and mitigate risks during a transition period from the applicability date of 5 March 2008 to 5 March 2011.

1. A timeline for adoption of the language proficiency requirements in their national regulations;

2. A timeline for establishment of language training and assessment capabilities;

3. A description of a risk based prioritization system for the interim measures to be put in place until full compliance with the language proficiency requirements is achieved;

4. A procedure for endorsing licenses to indicate the holders' language proficiency level;

5. Designation of a national focal point in relation to the English language proficiency implementation plan;

6. Make their language proficiency implementation plans available to all other Contracting States by posting their plans on the ICAO website as soon as practicable, but prior to 5 March 2008;

7. Notify ICAO of differences to the language proficiency Standards and Recommended Practices;

8. Publish differences to the language proficiency requirements in relation to the provision of air navigation services in their Aeronautical Information Publications.

ICAO Annex 6 Part III Chapter 1 paragraph 1.1.3 states:
"Operators shall ensure that flight crew members demonstrate the ability to speak and understand the language used for radiotelephony communications as specified in Annex 1".

In this case, the definition of "Operators" means air carriers. In other words, *the airline retains the responsibility* for their pilots training and compliance. Even though, a State or a designee might be conducting the actual testing. Member Associations should therefore hold your individual airlines responsible.

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