Preflight Checks

CURRENT SITUATION

ICAO Annex 6 para 4.3.1 states, "*a flight shall not be commenced until flight preparation forms have been completed certifying that the pilot-in-command is satisfied that:*

a) *the aeroplane is airworthy and the appropriate certificates (i.e airworthiness, registration) are on board the aeroplane;*

b) *the instruments and equipment prescribed in Chapter 6, for the particular type of operation to be undertaken, are installed and are sufficient for the flight;*

c) *a maintenance release as prescribed in 8.8 has been issued in respect of the aeroplane;*

d) *the mass of the aeroplane and centre of gravity location are such that the flight can be conducted safely, taking into account the flight conditions expected;*

e) *any load carried is properly distributed and safely secured;*

f) *a check has been completed indicating that the operating limitations of Chapter 5 can be complied with for the flight to be undertaken; and*

g) *the Standards of 4.3.3 relating to operational flight planning have been complied with.*"

BACKGROUND

Thorough preflight checks are crucial for flight safety to eliminate possible threats. The list given by ICAO covers significant items, but it is missing two essential subjects: The purity of fuel and the cover of pitot tubes and static ports. The latter is especially important, since incidents with installed covers occur frequently, (the last known was in May 2022 in Brisbane).

IFALPA POSITION

IFALPA supports the provisions of para. 4.3.1 but believes that two additional items should be included in the list to ensure that:

- A check has been made of the purity of the fuel and of the water injection fluid, if any.
- The person conducting an exterior inspection of an aeroplane should make sure that all static ports and pitot tubes are fully clear. Any pitot type cover should be coloured in a conspicuous manner (preferably red and luminous) during both night and daylight hours. The covering and un-covering of the static ports and/or pitot tubes should be entered into the Technical Log Book (TLB)/Maintenance Log or equivalent.