



ADVISORY CIRCULAR

**CAA-AC-OPS011
November 2022**

EXIT ROW SEATING PROGRAMME REVIEW PROCESS.

1.0 PURPOSE

1.0.1 This Advisory Circular (AC) provides guidance to operators for occupancy of emergency exit rows, responsibilities of passengers seated in emergency exit rows, selection criteria of passengers who may occupy an emergency exit row, and recommendations related to language requirements and unstaffed exit row briefings.

1.0.2 This Advisory Circular (AC) cancels CAA-AC-OPS011 dated July 2020.

2.0 REFERENCES

- I** Regulation 47 of the Civil Aviation (Operation of Aircraft Commercial Air Transport - Aeroplanes) Regulations, 2022.

3.0 GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES.

The Operators must come up with procedures in their manuals, satisfying the requirement of Regulation 47 of the Civil Aviation (Operation of Aircraft - Commercial Air Transport Aeroplanes) Regulations, 2022.

4.0 GENERAL

Emergency exit row seating encompasses each seat in a row of seats located at an emergency exit, having direct access to the exit. In some instances, cabin crew members may not be positioned at these exits for a flight. When emergency exits are not assigned to cabin crew members, they are referred to as unstaffed exits (or self-help exits). Unstaffed exits may be floor-level exits or window exits, such as those located at the over wing. Passengers are expected to operate unstaffed exits in the event of an evacuation. Regulations require operators to ensure that passengers are made familiar with the location and use of emergency exits. The Authority mandates unstaffed exit-row briefings. Although an unstaffed exit may contain placards with operating instructions, passengers who have not been briefed may be unable to operate it as expected, in the event of an evacuation, or fulfil the responsibilities expected of persons seated in an emergency-exit row. The absence of a briefing may lead to a degradation of safety.

5.0 EMERGENCY EXIT ROW OCCUPANCY

The operator shall establish procedures on emergency exit row occupancy, including for unstaffed exit rows during critical phases of flight. The operator shall also establish procedures to ensure that seats located at emergency exit rows are not occupied by passengers whose presence in those seats could adversely affect the safety of passengers or crew members during an evacuation.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF UNSTAFFED EXIT ROW OCCUPANTS.

The operator's procedures shall include a means to communicate the responsibility of unstaffed exit row occupants to passengers including the importance of the role of such passengers in the event of an emergency. Passengers seated at unstaffed exit rows shall be briefed on their responsibility including

- a) verbally accepting the responsibility to operate the exit;
- b) locating the emergency exit;
- c) comprehending the instructions for operating the exit;
- d) knowing when and how to open the exit;
- e) following all instructions given by a crew member, including the signal or command to evacuate.
- f) checking for hazards before opening the exit; and
- g) stowing (or otherwise disposing of) the exit hatch, if removable, so that it will not impede the use of the emergency exit.

In addition, the operator may elect to brief passengers seated at staffed exit rows (e.g., passenger seats at an emergency exit row located opposite to a cabin crew seat) and cover the items listed in section.

Note. In the event of an anticipated emergency landing or ditching, cabin crew may assign additional responsibilities to passengers seated at emergency exit rows.

7.0 SELECTION CRITERIA TO OCCUPY AN EMERGENCY EXIT ROW

7.0.1 The operator's procedures shall include criteria that passengers must meet in order to be eligible to occupy seats located in an emergency exit row. Such criteria are necessary so that a passenger's presence at an emergency exit row does not adversely affect the safety of other occupants during an evacuation. Passengers seated in emergency exit rows must meet the following criteria:

- a) be physically capable of operating the emergency exit;
- b) be capable of understanding the printed and spoken instructions;
- c) be able to determine if the exit is safe to open visually;
- d) have sufficient mobility, strength and dexterity to reach, operate and stow (or otherwise dispose of) the exit hatch, if removable;
- e) be able to receive aural information from the crew and to communicate that information to other passengers orally;

- f) be of a minimum age (15 years) to ensure that he/she has the physical, cognitive and sensory capacity to operate the exit;
- g) not be responsible for another person, as this can hinder the opening of the exit;
- h) not be travelling with any animal in the cabin (service, emotional, and/or pet);
- i) not have a condition that might cause him/her harm by opening the exit; and
- j) not have any other condition that might slow the opening of the exit, the flow of passengers or impede the pathway

7.0.2 The operator's procedures shall clearly indicate persons who may not, under any circumstance, occupy an emergency exit row seat. These include the following:

- a) passengers who do not/will not accept responsibility for the emergency exit;
- b) passengers who do not meet the criteria as listed in section 7.1 above and
- c) passengers under escort, such as inadmissible persons, deportees or prisoners.

7.0.3 It may be difficult for the operator or its cabin crew members to assess a passenger's abilities and language comprehension. The operator should have procedures in place for ground crew and cabin crew to further validate the selection criteria and occupancy restrictions of an emergency exit row (e.g., passengers with physical disabilities, language comprehension, communication abilities).

8.0 LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

8.0.1 Time is critical during an emergency. In addition to operating the emergency exit, passengers seated in an emergency exit row must understand the verbal commands of the crew during the evacuation process. These commands vary depending on the nature and location of the accident, potential fire, or other danger outside or inside the aircraft. Therefore, it is critical that passengers seated in emergency exit rows understand all commands of the crew (e.g., when to, and when not to, open exits).

8.0.2 Passengers are expected to open unstaffed exits during an evacuation. As noted in section 9.1, regulations require operators to brief all passengers seated in emergency exit rows by informing them of the location and use of the emergency exits in the event of an evacuation. This requirement may not specify a designated language for the briefing. Therefore, the unstaffed exit row briefing may be conducted in any language that is mutually understood by both the cabin crew member and the passenger. The assigned inspector shall ensure that the operator has procedures in place to ensure that the unstaffed exit row briefing is conducted in a language that is understood by all passengers seated in the exit row.

9.0 UNSTAFFED EXIT ROW BRIEFING

9.0.1 Briefings are an integral part of passenger safety and, as such, an educational opportunity. Specific unstaffed exit row briefings should be included, as part of the operator's procedures, to provide the necessary information to passengers on the operation of exits and the responsibilities of seating in emergency exit rows where cabin crew are not

present. These briefings lead to increased passenger awareness, improved performance in an evacuation, and a higher level of safety.

9.0.2 Means of communicating the information required in the unstaffed exit row briefing might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Electronic communication of emergency exit row occupant responsibilities (e.g., use of technology— PEDs, kiosks, online check-in); and
- b) Electronic verification and validation of acceptance of responsibilities—if not successful, a passenger should not be permitted to occupy a seat in that row.

