



CC/ATCG/FAM/2020/01

January 27, 2020

  
The Chairman  
Airports Authority of India  
Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan  
New Delhi-110003

**Route Familiarization Flight for Air Traffic Controllers**

Sir;

The aviation industry in India has witnessed a phenomenal boom in the past and is poised for a quantum leap in the near future. The Indian Aviation has not only been neck to neck in growth with the global players, it is well placed to accelerate further. The phenomenal growth of air traffic has put extreme pressure on the whole civil aviation industry in India. The role of Air Traffic Control Officers in maintaining the safety records with constraints in infrastructure and inadequate automation is praiseworthy. Undenying the fact that they are extending all co-operation to AAI Management, Airlines and Government at this critical juncture.

(2) Having recruited over two thousand ATCOs in the last 10 years is appreciated. At the same time proper training, skill enhancement activities and exposure to various situations like ensuring cockpit familiarization should be undertaken with utmost priority.

(3) Airports Authority of India management has viewed Familiarisation Flights for ATCOs as an unnecessary perk to them rather than an **ICAO-mandated mandatory training procedure (DOC 9426)**. The Airlines management views this as something which causes loss of saleable flight seats especially when there is no pressure exerted either by the Ministry or the AAI. **ATC Guild always maintained that ATCOs must appreciate the cock-pit workload and pilots must visit ATS Units for better understanding and co-operation between these two sets of very important aviation personnel. This will go a long way in resolving a lot of issues. This is prevalent in other countries.**

(4) It is a pathetic situation that instructors posted at training institutes, like CATC, HTC and NIATAM, have to tell time and again to the trainees that cockpit functions and cockpit workload must be appreciated. Fact remains, they have not seen the face of cockpit so far. They must be exposed to such environment to make them more confident, meaningful and skilled.

(5) In spite of the instructions issued by the DGCA in 2006 to Airline operators, there is virtually no progress in this matter (except Indigo Airlines complying to DGCA order) as AAI is not pursuing it with DGCA, Airlines and Ministry seriously. A bare fact is that there are many Radar Controllers having more than one decade experience who have not seen the cock-pit so far.

(6) Even though clear instructions exist and there is not much hesitation on the part of Regulator and Airlines, **the lackadaisical attitude of the ATM Directorate is the root cause of non-resumption of this essential requirement as mandated by the ICAO.**

Now that ATCOs in India are licensed and Instructors at the ATS Training Organizations (ATSTO) are standardized as per ICAO requirement, it is high time for ATM Directorate to concentrate more on these issues of skill enhancement.

(7) The issue of Familiarization Flights for Air Traffic Controllers in Domestic and International sectors has been hanging on fire since 1997. The on-now-off-now status of the issue has long turned it into a farce. This is despite everyone in aviation acknowledging the benefits of ATCOs being familiarized with latest cockpits, cockpit procedures and Pilot's workload.

**(8) It is pertinent to mention that an expert committee (constituted by AAI) headed by Mr. Bimal Jhulka had categorically recommended route familiarization flights for ATCOs in international and domestic sectors.**

(9) Even though ATM and CAP Directorates are prompt in replicating west standards in India, the advertent overlooking of this aspect is disgusting to the hardworking ATCOs.

(10) When India poised to become the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest aviation market in the world, it is imperative that the licensed category of employees in AAI i.e. ATCOs shall be given due care for optimum service delivery.

**ATC Guild requests you to urgently look into this issue and direct ATM Directorate to make co-ordination, as appropriate, with Ministry, DGCA and Airlines so that ATCOs and ATC Instructors in India get route familiarization flights in domestic and international sectors.**

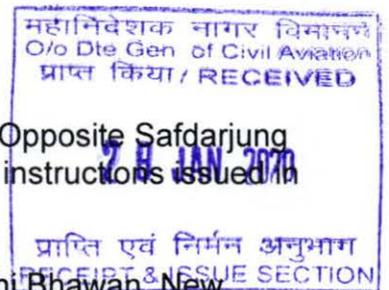
With regards,

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(Alok Yadav)  
General Secretary

Copy to:

1. **The Director General of Civil Aviation**, Technical Centre, Opposite Safdarjung Airport, New Delhi-110003 with a request to ensure that the instructions issued in this regard to Airlines in 2006 is complied with.
2. **The Member (ANS)**, Airports Authority of India, Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan, New Delhi for information and necessary action.



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27/1/2020