Safety Information Bulletin

Aerodromes

SIB No.: 2017-08

Issued: 02 June 2017

Subject: Access for Rescue and Fire Fighting Services at Aerodromes

Ref. Publications:

- Commission Regulation (EU) No 139/2014 on the requirements and administrative procedures related to aerodromes of 12 February 2014.
- EASA ED Decision 2016/027/R amending Certification Specifications and Guidance Material for Aerodrome Design, Annex CS-ADR-DSN, Issue 3.
- EASA ED Decision 2014/012/R adopting Acceptable Means of Compliance and Guidance Material for Aerodromes.
- ICAO Doc 9137, Airport Services Manual (Part 1 - Rescue and Firefighting).

Applicability:

National Aviation Authorities (NAAs) and aerodrome operators.

Description:

The intent of this SIB is to raise awareness at NAAs and aerodrome operators about the need to provide convenient access for rescue and fire-fighting services (RFFS) vehicles to areas both within the aerodrome perimeter but also, where a fence is provided, outside the aerodrome perimeter.

In a recent accident, the landing aeroplane overran the runway and ended up in an area next to the aerodrome. Subsequent investigation found that the aerodrome's RFFS vehicles that responded to the event encountered problems accessing the accident site due to a locked gate located between the aerodrome and the crash area.

In a similar event, the aeroplane veered-off during landing, exited the runway, crashed into trees and caught fire. The investigation revealed that access of RFFS personnel was obstructed by a locked gate situated outside of the aerodrome perimeter fence, but within the aerodrome area. Due to this, the vehicle had to stop at the gate and could not be positioned closer to the accident area.

In another case, an aeroplane, after its take-off, crashed within the aerodrome perimeter. The investigation identified that an internal fence surrounding the runway strip (located within the external aerodrome perimeter fence) prevented the access for the first responding RFFS vehicle. This was due to the height of the concrete base of the fence, and the fact that the gates across the fence were locked.

Similar situations might exist at other aerodromes.

In case of an occurrence, aerodrome RFFS vehicles may be required to intervene on the runway, or other parts of the movement area, but also outside of the aerodrome perimeter. In such cases, the time between the emergency alarm and the actual intervention is crucial for the success of the rescue and firefighting operations.

EASA Acceptable Means of Compliance AMC1 ADR.OPS.B.005(b) foresees that an assessment[1] of the approach and departure areas within 1 000 metres from the runway threshold should be carried out in order to determine the available options for intervention.

According to EASA Guidance Material GM2 ADR.OPS.B.005(a) the Aerodrome Emergency Plan should include details of the off aerodrome areas for which the aerodrome RFFS will provide a response, and the size and nature of the response.

To facilitate the response of the RFSS, it is imperative to provide suitable access within the aerodrome itself, but also to the areas outside the aerodrome identified within the Aerodrome Emergency Plan. Related EASA guidance exists (GM1 ADR-DSN.T.900) regarding:

- the provision of emergency access roads in order to achieve minimum response times of the RFFS;

- the need to provide convenient access to outside areas, in case a fence is provided at the aerodrome perimeter, taking into account the RFFS vehicles that will need to use the access points provided.

In addition, EASA GM1 ADR-DSN.T.920 provides guidance for the provision of gates in case a perimeter fence or other barrier is provided at an aerodrome. Such access points should be of an adequate number, including for emergency operations.

At this time, the safety concern described in this SIB does not warrant the issuance of a safety measure under Regulation (EU) 139/2014, Annex II, ADR.AR.A.040.

Recommendations:

The Agency recommends:

(a) Aerodrome operators to ensure that:
- RFFS are given convenient and expeditious access, at all times, both within the aerodrome perimeter fence, but also to areas outside the aerodrome perimeter fence where their intervention may be necessary;

- Aerodrome perimeter fences have provision for rapid egress to areas outside the aerodrome perimeter fence, by way of frangible barriers or other means of ensuring convenient and expeditious access;

- Emergency egress provision is planned in coordination with relevant security authorities.

(b) The competent authorities to take into account the above recommendations during their safety oversight activities.

[1] For more information see ICAO Doc 9137, Airport Services Manual (Part 1 - Rescue and Firefighting), paragraph 13.3.

Contact(s):

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