

GADSS (Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System) Compliance For Foreign Operators into the Cayman Islands

This notice presents guidance for foreign operators into the Cayman Islands pertaining to the recently introduced GADSS Standard in Annex 6 Part 1:

Annex 6 — Operation of Aircraft

Part I, International Commercial Air Transport — Aeroplanes

6.18 LOCATION OF AN AEROPLANE IN DISTRESS

6.18.1 As of 1 January 2025, all aeroplanes of a maximum certificated take-off mass of over 27 000 kg for which the individual certificate of airworthiness is first issued on or after 1 January 2024, shall autonomously transmit information from which a position can be determined by the operator at least once every minute, when in distress, in accordance with Appendix 9.

6.18.2 **Recommendation.**— *All aeroplanes of a maximum certificated take-off mass of over 5 700 kg for which the individual certificate of airworthiness is first issued on or after 1 January 2023, should autonomously transmit information from which a position can be determined at least once every minute, when in distress, in accordance with Appendix 9.*

6.18.3 The operator shall make position information of a flight in distress available to the appropriate organizations, as established by the State of the Operator.

Note 1.— Refer to 4.2.1.3.1 for operator responsibilities when using third parties.

Note 2.— Operational procedures for monitoring and making position information of a flight in distress available to the appropriate organizations in a timely manner are contained in PANS-OPS, Volume III, Section 10.

Our Foreign Aircraft Permit stipulates:

“The airline shall ensure that all aircraft operated comply with all relevant international standards and recommended practices relating to airworthiness and operating standards adopted from time to time by the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization under the provisions of the Chicago Convention and by the aeronautical authorities of the State of the Operator (collectively, ‘the Standards’).”

Because the receiving State is obliged under Article 33 of the Chicago Convention to recognize “certificates of airworthiness and certificates of competency and licences issued or rendered valid by the contracting State in which the aircraft is registered,” any operator compliant with the legislation of its State of Registry (and/or State of the Operator) meets the requirements for the receiving State to issue an approval or permission. A Standard typically applies only if it has been implemented in national legislation.

If a State has enacted legislation giving effect to the Standard and an operator is non-compliant, it is the responsibility of the State of the Operator to issue an exemption. In such cases, we—as the receiving State—would require evidence of compliance or of a duly issued exemption before granting a permit.

It should be noted that the United States has filed a difference under Article 38 of the Convention, making the Standard inapplicable to U.S.-registered aircraft.