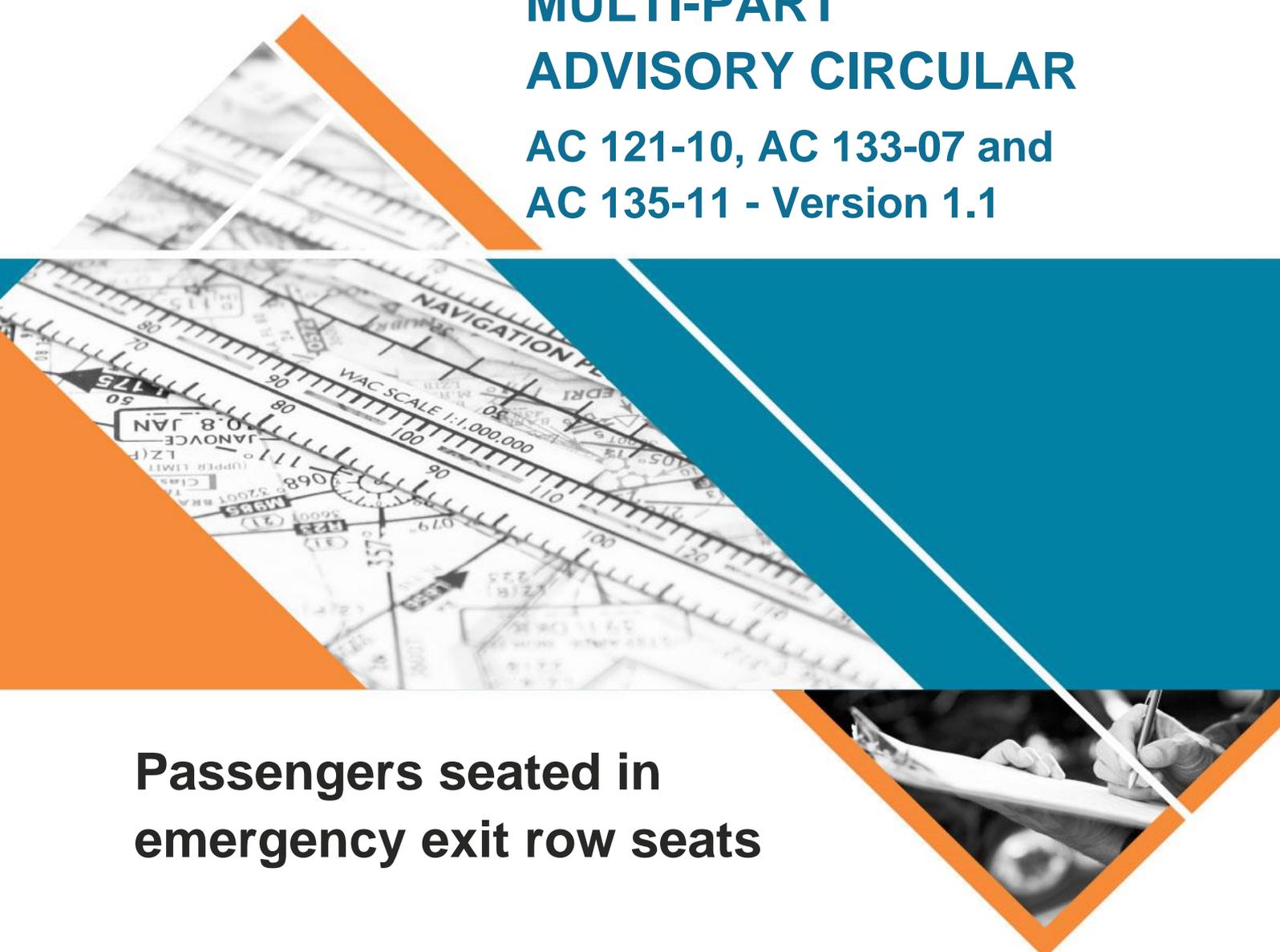




MULTI-PART ADVISORY CIRCULAR

AC 121-10, AC 133-07 and
AC 135-11 - Version 1.1



Passengers seated in emergency exit row seats

Date September 2024
File ref D24/387951

Advisory circulars are intended to provide advice and guidance to illustrate a means, but not necessarily the only means, of complying with the Regulations, or to explain certain regulatory requirements by providing informative, interpretative, and explanatory material.

Advisory circulars should always be read in conjunction with the relevant regulations.

Audience

This Advisory Circular (AC) applies to:

- aircraft operators
- cabin safety supervisory personnel
- crew members
- ground operational personnel
- passengers.

Purpose

This AC provides guidance regarding the requirements for assigning passengers to seats in an emergency exit row for operations that fall under Parts 133, 135 and 121 of CASR.

The purpose of this AC is to:

- assist with the development of procedures that will increase the probability of a timely and safe exit of occupants from the aircraft in the event of an emergency
- provide guidance on selection criteria for suitable persons to occupy emergency exit row seats
- provide guidance on the briefing provided to passengers occupying emergency exit row seats to ensure they are prepared for the function they may be required to perform in an evacuation
- recommend occupancy of emergency exit row seats by suitable persons or positioning crew members during critical phases of flight.

For further information

For further information, contact CASA's Operations Standards (telephone 131 757).

Unless specified otherwise, all subregulations, regulations, Divisions, Subparts, and Parts referenced in this AC are references to the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 (CASR)*.

Status

This version of the AC is approved by the Branch Manager, Flight Standards.

Note: Changes made in the current version are annotated with change bars.

Version	Date	Details
v1.1	September 2024	Minor referencing updates.
v1.0	May 2021	Initial AC.

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1 Reference material

1.1 Acronyms

The acronyms and abbreviations used in this AC are listed in the table below.

Acronym	Description
AC	advisory circular
ABP	able-bodied passenger
CAA NZ	Civil Aviation Authority New Zealand
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
CASR	<i>Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998</i>
EASA	European Union Aviation Safety Agency
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FAR	Federal Aviation Regulation
IATA	International Air Transport Association
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
TCCA	Transport Canada Civil Aviation

1.2 Definitions

Terms that have specific meaning within this AC are defined in the table below. Where definitions from the civil aviation legislation have been reproduced for ease of reference, these are identified by 'grey shading'. Should there be a discrepancy between a definition given in this AC and the civil aviation legislation, the definition in the legislation prevails.

Term	Definition
able-bodied passengers	Passengers who are clearly physically able and are willing to assist crew in emergency situations.
cabin crew member	A crew member who performs, in the interests of the safety of an aircraft's passengers, duties assigned by the operator or the pilot in command of the aircraft, but is not a flight crew member.
crew member	a person is a crew member if the person is carried on the aircraft and is: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. a person: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i who is authorised by the operator of the aircraft to carry out a specified function during flight time relating to the operation, maintenance, use or safety of the aircraft, the safety of the aircraft's passengers, or the care or security of any cargo which may affect the safety of the aircraft or its occupants, and ii who has been trained to carry out that function; or b. a person who is on board the aircraft for the purpose of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i giving or receiving instruction in a function mentioned in

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii being tested for a qualification associated with a function mentioned in subparagraph (a)(i); or c. a person authorised by CASA under these Regulations, or by the operator, to carry out an audit, check, examination, inspection or test of a person mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b).
critical phases of flight	The period of high workload on the flight deck; normally, the periods between the beginning of taxiing until the aircraft is on the route climb phase and between the final part of descent to aircraft parking.
direct access	A direct route or passage from a seat to an exit from which a passenger can proceed without entering an aisle or passing around an obstruction.
emergency exit	means an external door, hatch or window on an aircraft intended for use by passengers or crew in an emergency.
emergency exit seats	<p>these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each seat having direct access to an exit • each seat in a row of seats through which passengers would have to pass to gain access to an exit, from the first seat inboard of the exit to the first aisle inboard of the exit, and • a seat from which a passenger can proceed directly to an exit without entering an aisle or passing around an obstacle.
exposition	<p>for an Australian air transport operator, means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the set of documents approved by CASA under regulation 119.075 of CASR in relation to the operator, and b. if the set of documents is changed under regulation 119.085, 119.095 or 119.105, or in accordance with the process mentioned in regulation 119.100—the set of documents as changed. <p>Essentially, the exposition is a document or set of documents describing how an organisation operates safely (often referred to as the operations manual).</p>
operator	<p>of an aircraft, means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. if the operation of the aircraft is authorised by an AOC, a Part 141 certificate or an aerial work certificate—the holder of the AOC or certificate, or b. otherwise—the person, organisation or enterprise engaged in aircraft operations involving the aircraft.
passenger	<p>in relation to an aircraft, means a person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i intends to travel on a particular flight on the aircraft, or ii is on board the aircraft for a flight, or iii has disembarked from the aircraft following a flight, and b. who is not a member of the crew of the aircraft for the flight.
restricted person	<p>means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a deportee (within the meaning of subsection 5 (1) of the Migration Act 1958), or b. a removee (within the meaning of subsection 5 (1) of the Migration Act 1958), or

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. a person in custody, or d. a passenger carried on an aircraft: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i who is on the aircraft because the passenger has been refused entry to a country, or ii whose passport does not include a visa required for entry to the passenger's destination country.
suitable person	<p>A person is suitable to occupy an emergency exit row seat or a seat adjacent to an emergency exit if the person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. is reasonably fit, strong, and able to assist with the rapid evacuation of the aircraft in an emergency, and b. would not, because of a condition or disability, including an inability to understand oral instructions, hinder: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i other passengers during an evacuation of the aircraft in an emergency, or ii the aircraft's crew in carrying out their duties in an emergency.
unstaffed exit	Emergency exit for which no cabin crew member has been positioned for the flight.

1.3 References

Legislation

Legislation is available on the Federal Register of Legislation website <https://www.legislation.gov.au/>

Document	Title
Division 133.D.7 of CASR	Passenger transport and medical transport
Division 135.D.7 of CASR	Passenger transport and medical transport
Division 121.D.7 of CASR	Passenger transport and medical transport

International Civil Aviation Organization documents

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) documents are available for purchase from <http://store1.icao.int/>

Many ICAO documents are also available for reading, but not purchase or downloading, from the ICAO eLibrary (<https://elibrary.icao.int/home>).

Document	Title
ICAO Doc 10086	Manual on Information and Instructions for Passenger Safety First Edition, 2018

Advisory material

CASA's advisory materials are available at <https://www.casa.gov.au/publications-and-resources/guidance-materials>

Document	Title
Multi-Part AC 91-19, AC 121-04, AC 133-10, AC	Passenger safety information

Document	Title
135-12 and AC 138-10	

Other

Document	Title
CAA NZ AC 121-6	Occupancy of Emergency Exit Rows Revision 0, 20 December 2018
EASA	Easy Access Rules for Air Operations (Regulation (EU) No 965/2012) Revision 14, October 2019
FAA 121-24E	Passenger safety information briefing and briefing card
IATA	Cabin Operations Safety Best Practices Guide Ninth edition, January 2024
TCCA AC 700-014	Passenger Seating Requirements and Accessible Air Transportation Issue 01, August 2009

2 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The actions of passengers in an emergency can have a significant impact on survival. Passengers seated adjacent to emergency exits play a particularly important role in assisting the crew during an evacuation where response time is critical.
- 2.1.2 Emergency exit row seating encompasses each seat in a row of seats located at an emergency exit, with direct access to the exit. When emergency exits are not assigned to 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 on some aircraft at the over-wing location.
- 2.1.3 Having at least one suitable person seated at unstaffed exit rows or at an exit where one crew member is responsible for a pair of exits during critical phases of flight, will aid in the timely and safe exit of passengers during an emergency evacuation and reduce the possibility of injuries and loss of life.
- 2.1.4 While all passengers must act according to safety directions given by the crew during the evacuation process¹, the reaction of passengers seated in an emergency exit row is even more vital. The crew commands will vary depending on many factors (e.g. the nature and location of the emergency, potential fire, and other dangers outside or inside the aircraft). It is essential that passengers seated in emergency exit rows are well briefed to ensure they understand how and when to open specific exits, and when the exits should not be opened.
- 2.1.5 The following considerations are relevant when developing procedures for identifying suitable persons and the assignment of those persons to emergency exit rows seats.
- 2.1.6 The passengers assigned:
- are sufficiently able-bodied to meet the functions required to operate an exit and assist with the rapid evacuation of the aircraft e.g. having sufficient mobility, strength, and dexterity in both arms, both hands and both legs
 - would not, because of a condition or disability, including an inability to understand oral instructions, adversely affect the safety of other passengers or crew members during an evacuation, or the aircrafts crew in carrying out their duties in an evacuation
 - are willing to provide assistance in an emergency evacuation should it be required
 - are provided with an adequate safety briefing specific to their responsibilities in an emergency.

¹ CASR 91.580

3 Managing safety risks

3.1.1 The safety risks associated with not having appropriate briefings and suitable persons seated at unstaffed exits include, but are not limited to:

- a reduction in the number of exits available for evacuation where crew members are unable to get to the exits to open them e.g. available exits are not opened
- delays in opening available exits, resulting in delays to the evacuation process
- exits being opened when they should not be e.g. a passenger opens the exit without assessing the outside conditions
- operation of exits by passengers who are not aware of the instructions specific to that exit e.g. how to open, remove and discard the exit
- passengers seated in an emergency exit row having an adverse reaction to the emergency due to inadequate briefings
- passengers that are not suitably able-bodied, lacking the strength and ability to remove the exit, attempting to open the exit, and delaying or impeding an evacuation process.

3.1.2 It is recommended that these safety risks be considered in the development of procedures to mitigate potential adverse situations at these exits during an emergency.

4 Eligibility criteria for passengers assigned emergency exit row seats

- 4.1.1 It is recommended that the operator's procedures include eligibility criteria that passengers must meet to occupy seats located in an emergency exit row.
- 4.1.2 ICAO provides the following guidance in relation to criteria for assigning passengers to emergency exit row seats²:
- Passengers seated in emergency exit rows should meet the following criteria:
 - o be physically capable of operating the emergency exit
 - o be capable of understanding the printed and spoken emergency instructions
 - o be able to visually determine if the exit is safe to open
 - o have sufficient mobility, strength, and dexterity to reach, operate and stow (or otherwise dispose of) the emergency exit if removable
 - o be able to receive oral information from the crew and to communicate that information to other passengers orally
 - o be of a minimum age (as established by the operator) to ensure that they have the physical, cognitive, and sensory capacity to operate the exit
 - o not be responsible for another person, as this can hinder the opening of the exit
 - o not be travelling with any animal in the cabin
 - o not have a condition that might cause them harm by opening the exit, and
 - o not have any other condition that might slow the opening of the exit or the flow of passengers, or impede the pathway.
 - The operator's procedures should clearly indicate persons who may not, under any circumstances, occupy an emergency exit row seat e.g. passengers who do not/will not accept responsibility for the emergency exit.
- 4.1.3 Some questions that might assist an operator in establishing their criteria for suitable persons, in conjunction with their safety management system (SMS), include:
- Does the suitable person criteria take the type and weight of the exit/exit door into account?
 - What measures are in place to ensure that a suitable person does not become unsuitable for emergency exit row seating during flight (such as, but not limited to, a passenger who does not fit the suitable person criteria swapping seats and sitting in the emergency exit row)?
 - How does a continuous risk assessment process consider the choice of passengers seated in exit rows?
 - How does a continuous risk assessment process analyse situations that might arise in an emergency?
 - What are the processes and training for cabin crew and ground operational personnel to re-seat ineligible exit row passengers before flight/during flight/for landing?

² Source document: ICAO Doc 10086 Manual on Information and Instructions for Passenger Safety, First Edition 2018

- Is data logged and are actions taken to mitigate the above situations with the aim of preventing them from recurring?
- What are the responsibilities of unstaffed exit row occupants?

5 Assessment of passenger suitability to occupy emergency exit row seating

- 5.1.1 It may be difficult for the operator or its operational personnel to assess a passenger's abilities and language comprehension; therefore, it is important that procedures be developed to assist personnel and crew validate the selection criteria and occupancy restrictions of an emergency exit row.
- 5.1.2 Assigning suitable passengers to emergency exit row seats prior to boarding the aircraft is preferable. To facilitate this, it is recommended that, in addition to cabin crew, the procedures are provided to personnel that:
- accept passengers at check-in
 - assist with check-in at kiosks
 - are responsible for passenger boarding.
- 5.1.3 Where passengers are able to use electronic media to select exit row seats and check in without coming into contact with the operator's personnel (e.g. self-service check-in options such as kiosks or the internet), a means of screening those passengers for suitability will need to be addressed in the procedures.
- 5.1.4 Procedures should be established to allocate duties to a crew member (or members) for assessing the suitability of emergency exit row passengers once they have boarded the aircraft³.
- 5.1.5 It is recommended that the procedures for the pre-flight individual emergency exit seat verification include:
- visual assessment by an assigned crew member to determine suitability of each passenger occupying an exit seat
 - verbal assessment by an assigned crew member to determine suitability of each passenger occupying an exit seat
 - a request to read over the safety information briefing card regarding exit seating
 - agreement from each passenger occupying an exit seat that they are willing and able to assist in an emergency evacuation
 - informing the assigned personnel that exit seat verification has been confirmed before boarding door closure.
- 5.1.6 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. Commands may 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 given by the crew (e.g. when to, and when not to, open exits).

³ CASR 121.270 (4)

- 5.1.7 The need to re-assess passengers seated at an emergency exit row prior to landing to ensure ongoing suitability should be considered e.g. a passenger may have become ill, intoxicated, or sedated during the flight, or been re-located to another seat. In any of these cases, a different passenger could be seated in the exit row during descent and would not have received the individual safety briefing and suitability assessment prior to flight.

6 Emergency exit row occupant briefing

- 6.1.1 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 safety⁴.
- 6.1.2 Specific emergency exit row briefings lead to increased passenger awareness, improved performance in an evacuation, and a higher level of safety. They provide the necessary information to passengers not only on the operation of exits, but also on the responsibilities of sitting in emergency exit rows where cabin crew are not present.
- 6.1.3 For expanded guidance on emergency exit row briefings, refer to Multi-Part AC 91-19, AC 121-04, AC 133-10, AC 135-12 and AC 138-10 - Passenger safety information.

⁴ ICAO Doc 10086 Manual on Information and Instructions for Passenger Safety, 1st Edition, 2018