



PROTOCOL

(OPS.14) - Foreign registered aircraft special flight authorisations

December 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our offices are located and the places to which we travel for work. We also acknowledge the Traditional Custodians' continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

Artwork: James Baban.

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1. Purpose

This protocol is for the assessment of an application for a special flight authorisation under regulation 91.970 of the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998* (CASR). The protocol has been designed to work in conjunction with other protocols such as OPS.138 Aerial work operations where the operator intends to use a foreign registered aircraft. This protocol enables standardisation of the assessment process.

The Protocol does not apply to aircraft operated under Part 103 - Sport and recreation aircraft or Part 132—Limited category aircraft.

2. Concept and philosophy

Aircraft are airworthy when they meet their approved design and are safe to operate. ICAO Annex 8 sets the international airworthiness standards. Aircraft that comply can be issued a standard certificate of airworthiness or a multi-category CoA, where the aircraft can be converted from one category to another.

A foreign registered aircraft with a standard CoA or a multi-CoA (not operating in restricted category) from an ICAO contracting state can operate in Australia without additional approval.

If a foreign registered aircraft does not meet Annex 8 but is still safe to fly, for example a restricted category aircraft, its state of registry may issue a special certificate of airworthiness or multi-category CoA for operations within its territory. Additionally, the state of registry may authorise the aircraft to fly under a SFP. In each case CASA must issue a special flight authorisation (SFA) to allow the aircraft to operate in Australian territory.

Regulation 91.965 states that to be flown in Australian territory the aircraft must comply with the Chicago Convention relating to:

- the nationality mark and registration mark of the aircraft
- the aircraft's certificate of airworthiness
- the number and description of, and the holding of, licences and ratings by the crew members of the aircraft
- the documents to be carried by the aircraft
- the flight and manoeuvre of the aircraft
- radio equipment carried by, or fitted to, the aircraft

However, a foreign registered aircraft may be flown in the Australian territory without a certificate of airworthiness mentioned in subparagraph 91.965(1)(b)(ii) if a Special Flight Authorisation (SFA) is issued under regulation 91.970.

3. Process

All administration tasks should follow standard regulatory service administration procedures (as applicable), in addition to the following:

- a. For a special flight authorisation, operators will submit the SFA application form to International_ops@casa.gov.au for an approval under regulation 91.970 of CASR.
- b. International operations will determine whether the application falls within their scope commercial air transport (into/out of Australian territory), if not they will forward the application to regservices for processing.
- c. Regservices will create a case in EAP to be assigned to a CASA inspector as either the project manager or the assessor, depending on the application.
- d. All associated CASA staff must be knowledgeable of, and competent with, Principle (OPS.14), which provides details for the assessment of a special flight authorisation.

- e. The relevant sections (determined by scope) of Worksheet (OPS.14) must be completed by the CASA inspector and saved as a PDF document in RMS, including:
- f. the assessment summary
- g. the approval data sheet.
- h. The inspector must complete EAP in accordance with the EAP OAS Case Management - Regulatory Oversight Division (ROD) handbook (CASA-03-550).

3.1 Recommendation endorsement

All recommendations must be endorsed by a separate person, normally a Manager Regulatory Services, prior to the delegate issuing the authorisation. The Manager Regulatory Services may assign the endorsement to another inspector.

The role of the endorser is to:

- ensure all sections of the worksheets been completed
- the assessment summary page has been completed
- the approval data sheet has been completed
- all worksheets and relevant documents have been filed in RMS
- the "Assessment" section of EAP has been fulfilled
- the "Create recommendation" section of EAP has been fulfilled

If satisfied the endorser will complete the "Endorse recommendation" section of EAP and forward the task to the delegate.

If the assessing inspector holds the delegation for the authorisation, they can issue the authorisation.

4. List of supplements

Only the following supplements may be used in support of this protocol. The most recently approved versions will be found on the CASA intranet website. Approved forms are located on CASA's external website.

- Principle (OPS.14) - Foreign registered aircraft special flight authorisations
- Worksheet (OPS.14) - Foreign registered aircraft special flight authorisations

5. Scope

This protocol is applicable to foreign registered aircraft of a contracting state that do not have a standard certificate of airworthiness that complies with Annex 8 of the ICAO Chicago Convention.

Special Flight Permits must not be issued by CASA to a foreign registered aircraft.

6. Competency requirements

To conduct the assessment, inspectors must have successfully completed the foundation training and advanced regulatory assessment training programs. Flight operations inspectors (FOIs), airworthiness inspectors must hold the appropriate qualifications for the assessment of their specific areas.

Inspectors must also complete additional training in any other protocols related to the assessment.

7. Associated legislation

Table 1. Legislation associated with this protocol

Document	Title
Part 11 of CASR	Regulatory administrative procedures
Part 21 of CASR	Certification and airworthiness requirements for aircraft and parts
Part 91 of CASR	General operating and flight rules
Part 2 of ANR	Air Navigation (Aircraft Noise) Regulations 2018

8. Guidance references

Table 2. Guidance material relevant to this protocol

Document	Title
AC11-04	Approvals under CASR Parts 91,103,119,121,129,131,132,133,135,138 and149 (including MOS)
AC 21.1	Aircraft airworthiness certification categories and designations explained
AC 21.2	Standard Certificates of airworthiness
AC 21.3	Special certificates of airworthiness
AC 21.6	Restricted category aircraft certification
AC 21.10	Experimental certificates

9. ICAO references

Table 3. ICAO references applicable to this protocol

Document	Title
Annex 8	Airworthiness of aircraft
Doc 9760	Airworthiness manual

10. Revision history

Amendments/revisions of this protocol are recorded below in order of most recent first.

Table 4. Revision history table

Version No.	Date	Parts/Sections	Details
1.1	December 2025	Part 1	Clarification of Protocol purpose

Version No.	Date	Parts/Sections	Details
1.0	October 2025	All	First release