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Australian Government
Civil Aviation Safety Authority

PROTOCOL

(OPS.01) - Minimum Equipment List (MEL)

February 2025

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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.

Inside front cover artwork: James Baban.

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1 Purpose

This protocol is for the assessment of an operator Minimum Equipment List (MEL) under Part 91.Y of the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 (CASR). This protocol is for the assessment of an initial MEL application, a variation to an existing MEL or a Category B or Category C repair interval one-time extension.

This protocol enables standardisation of the assessment process. When an aircraft is type certified, the aircraft design has demonstrated compliance with the relevant design standards on the condition that all systems and equipment are operative. In certain circumstances, an aircraft system or item of equipment may become unserviceable, but the aircraft is still capable of safe flight.

To manage this, a Master Minimum Equipment List (MMEL) is developed by the type certificate holder for the aircraft type and approved by the State of Design as a means of offering relief from otherwise strict operational and maintenance requirements that only permit an aircraft to be flown with all systems and equipment operable. As an aircraft can be operated in variable operational environments, the registered operator of an aircraft must establish their own Minimum Equipment List (MEL) based on the MMEL for the particular aircraft type.

In accordance with 91.925 of the CASR an MEL includes a list of items in the aircraft that may (subject to any conditions or limitations specified in the document) be inoperative for a flight of the aircraft. It is a means to document the conditions and process under which certain equipment can be inoperative with a pre-approved defect, thereby reducing the need for ad-hoc regulatory approvals to operate an aircraft under such circumstances.

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) is responsible for the assessment, approval and subsequent surveillance of the registered operator's MEL and procedures, as well as providing a level of assurance that the organisation is competent and capable of performing the critical aspects of operational and maintenance management that underpins safe operations.

2 Concept and philosophy

An MEL is developed by the operator for each type and model of aircraft to be operated and is tailored to the specific configuration of installed equipment. Part 91 Manual of Standards requires that the operator's MEL must be based on the MMEL for the aircraft type. An operator MEL must conform to, or be more restrictive than, the MMEL for the type as approved by the issuer of the type certificate (State of Design). In addition, the MEL must also conform to any unique Australian legislative requirements.

The MEL needs to include instructions for its use, repair interval categories, actions to be taken (maintenance or operation) and placarding. Once approved, the MEL must be made available to flight crew, maintenance personnel and personnel responsible for operational control.

Delegates and persons authorised by CASA to approve an MEL must only do so within the scope of their approvals and when all legislative requirements and recommended practices are fulfilled, or appropriate alternate methods are deemed satisfactory.

3 Process

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

- a. For an initial issue of an MEL, operators will submit the Minimum Equipment List Application form (CASA-04-5704) to CASA for an approval under regulation 91.935 of CASR.
- b. Assessment of a variation to an MEL by CASA, operators will submit a Minimum Equipment List Application form (CASA-04-5704) to CASA, for an approval under regulation 91.940 of CASR.
- a. For a category B or category C repair interval one-time extension assessment by CASA, operators will submit a Minimum Equipment List Application form (CASA-04-5704) to CASA, for an approval under regulation 91.945 of CASR.

- 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. Regservices and the inspector should confirm that an EAP stop alert is not active.
- e. If required, the project manager will review the application and form a project team to conduct the assessment.
- f. All associated CASA staff must be knowledgeable of, and competent with, Principle (OPS.01), which provides details for the assessment of an initial issue, variation or one-time category B or category C repair interval.
- g. The relevant sections (determined by scope) of Worksheet (OPS.01) must be completed by the CASA inspector and saved as a PDF document in RMS, including:
 - h. the assessment summary.
 - i. the approval data sheet.
- j. If the application is a significant change, the inspector must complete the relevant section on the approval data sheet and provide the revision details for the exposition.
- k. The inspector must complete EAP in accordance with the EAP OAS Case Management - Regulatory Oversight Division (ROD) handbook (CASA-03-550).

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.01) - Minimum Equipment List.
- Worksheet (OPS.01) - Minimum Equipment List.

5 Scope

This protocol covers the technical aspects for assessing and approving an initial operator MEL, variation to an operators MEL and a one-time category B or category C item repair interval extension under Subpart 91.Y of CASR.

All other deviations from the MEL relating to inoperative equipment must be addressed through an engineering process under regulation 21.007 of CASR. This is provided for in Protocol (OPS.02) – Permissible Unserviceabilities and is out of scope of this protocol.

This protocol addresses the identification and development of nonessential equipment that maybe excluded from the MEL and form part of a separate list. These programs are not approved as part of the MEL, they form part of the operator approval process and are approved as part of the operator exposition and where applicable, under Subpart 42.G of CASR.

A Configuration Deviation List (CDL) is often combined with MEL documentation for convenience but forms part of the Aircraft Flight Manual. CDL items must not be approved or altered as part of an MEL approval.

6 Competency requirements

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

Note: FOIs who have completed dangerous goods training in the previous 2 years can assess dangerous goods compliance where the operator does not intend to consign and carry dangerous goods.

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
Subpart 91.Y	Civil Aviation Safety Regulations (CASR) 1998
Part 91 MOS	Chapter 28 – Requirements for minimum equipment lists

8 Guidance references

Table 2. Guidance material relevant to this protocol

Document	Title
ICAO Annex 6 - Operation of Aircraft	Annex 6, Part I, Chapter 6, paragraph 6.1.3 and Attachment E
ICAO Doc 9760 - Airworthiness Manual	Part IV, 2.4.7.10
CAAP 37-1(5)	Minimum Equipment Lists (MEL)
Part 91 AMC/GM	Section 10 of Part 91 Acceptable Means of Compliance/Guidance Material

9 ICAO references

Table 3. ICAO references applicable to this protocol

Document	Title
ICAO Annex 6 - Operation of Aircraft	Annex 6, Part I, Chapter 6, paragraph 6.1.3 and Attachment E
ICAO Doc 9760 - Airworthiness Manual	Part IV, 2.4.7.10

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
2.2	February 2025	All	Updated with repair interval extension requirements and general reference updates.
2.1	November 2022	All	Admin review only
2.0	June 2022	All	Reviewed for Operational Regulations implementation 02/12/2021
1.0	June 2020	All	First Issue