

ICAO standards and Annex 3

1. Why are standards necessary?

1.1. Civil aviation is a powerful force for progress in our modern global society. A healthy and growing air transport system creates and supports millions of jobs worldwide. It forms part of the economic lifeline of many countries. It is a catalyst for travel and tourism, the world's largest industry. Beyond economics, air transport enriches the social and cultural fabric of society and contributes to the attainment of peace and prosperity throughout the world.

1.2. Twenty four hours a day, 365 days of the year, an aeroplane takes off or lands every few seconds somewhere on the face of the earth. Every one of these flights is handled in the same, uniform manner, whether by air traffic control, airport authorities or pilots at the controls of their aircraft. Behind the scenes are millions of employees involved in manufacturing, maintenance and monitoring of the products and services required in the never-ending cycle of flights. In fact, modern aviation is one of the most complex systems of interaction between human beings and machines ever created.

1.3. This clock-work precision in procedures and systems is made possible by the existence of universally accepted standards known as Standards and Recommended Practices, or SARPs. SARPs cover all technical and operational aspects of international civil aviation, such as safety, personnel licensing, operation of aircraft, aerodromes, air traffic services (including meteorological information), accident investigation and the environment. Without SARPs, our aviation system would be at best chaotic and at worst unsafe.

2. Forms of Standards and Recommended Practices

2.1. The establishment and maintenance of international Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), as well as Procedures for Air Navigation Services (PANS), are fundamental tenets of the Chicago Convention and a core aspect of ICAO's mission and role.

2.2. SARPs and PANS are critical to ICAO Member States and other stakeholders, given that they provide the fundamental basis for harmonized global aviation safety and efficiency in the air and on the ground, the worldwide standardization of functional and performance requirements of air navigation facilities and services, and the orderly development of air transport.

2.3. Today, ICAO manages over 12,000 SARPs across the 19 Annexes and five PANS to the Convention, many of which are constantly evolving in concert with latest developments and innovations.

2.4. The development of SARPs and PANS follows a structured, transparent and multi-staged process – often known as the ICAO “amendment process” or “standards-making process” – involving a number of technical and non-technical bodies which are either within the Organization or closely associated with ICAO.

2.5. Typically, it takes approximately two years for an initial proposal for a new or improved Standard, Recommended Practice or procedure to be formally adopted or approved for inclusion in an Annex or a PANS. Occasionally, this timescale can be expanded or compressed depending on the nature and priority of the proposal under consideration.

2.6. A Standard is defined as any specification for physical characteristics, configuration, material, performance, personnel or procedure, the uniform application of which is recognized as necessary for the

safety or regularity of international air navigation and to which Contracting States will conform in accordance with the Convention; in the event of impossibility of compliance, notification to the Council is compulsory under Article 38 of the Convention.

2.7. A Recommended Practice is any specification for physical characteristics, configuration, material, performance, personnel or procedure, the uniform application of which is recognized as desirable in the interest of safety, regularity or efficiency of international air navigation, and to which Contracting States will endeavour to conform in accordance with the Convention. States are invited to inform the Council of non-compliance.

2.8. SARPs are formulated in broad terms and restricted to essential requirements. For complex systems such as communications equipment or, indeed, meteorological information and services, SARPs material is constructed in two sections: core SARPs - material of a fundamental regulatory nature contained within the main body of the Annexes, and detailed technical specifications placed either in Appendices to Annexes or in manuals.

2.9. The differences to SARPs notified by States are published in Supplements to Annexes.

3. Overview of Annex 3

Historical background

3.1. Standards and Recommended Practices relating to meteorology were first adopted by the (ICAO) Council on 16 April 1948, pursuant to the provisions of Article 37 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago, 1944), and designated as Annex 3 to the Convention with the title *Standards and Recommended Practices – Meteorological Codes*. The Standards and Recommended Practices were based on recommendations of the Special Session of the Meteorology Division, held in September 1947.

3.2. Table A (in Annex 3) shows the origin of subsequent amendments, together with a list of the principal subjects involved and the dates on which the Annex and the amendments were adopted or approved by the Council, when they became effective and when they became applicable. The title of Annex 3 was amended to read *Meteorological Service for International Air Navigation* with the adoption of Amendment 60 (8th Edition) in 1975.

Relation to corresponding WMO publications

3.3. The regulatory material contained in Annex 3 is, except for a few minor editorial differences, identical with that appearing in the *Technical Regulations* (WMO-No. 49), Volume II — *Meteorological Service for International Air Navigation*, Parts I and II.

3.4. The aeronautical meteorological code forms referred to in Annex 3 are developed by the World Meteorological Organization on the basis of aeronautical requirements contained in the Annex, or stated from time to time by the Council. The aeronautical meteorological code forms are promulgated in the *Manual on Codes* (WMO-No. 306), Volume I — *International Codes*.

Annex 3 components

3.5. Annex 3 is made up of the following component parts:

1.— *Material comprising the Annex proper:*

a) *Standards and Recommended Practices* adopted by the Council under the provisions of the Convention. They are defined as follows:

Standard: Any specification for physical characteristics, configuration, matériel, performance, personnel or procedure, the uniform application of which is recognized as necessary for the safety or regularity of international air navigation and to which Contracting States will conform in accordance with the Convention; in the event of impossibility of compliance, notification to the Council is compulsory under Article 38.

Recommended Practice: Any specification for physical characteristics, configuration, matériel, performance, personnel or procedure, the uniform application of which is recognized as desirable in the interest of safety, regularity or efficiency of international air navigation, and to which Contracting States will endeavour to conform in accordance with the Convention.

b) *Appendices* comprising material grouped separately for convenience but forming part of the Standards and Recommended Practices adopted by the Council.

c) *Definitions* of terms used in the Standards and Recommended Practices which are not self-explanatory in that they do not have accepted dictionary meanings. A definition does not have independent status but is an essential part of each Standard and Recommended Practice in which the term is used, since a change in the meaning of the term would affect the specification.

d) *Tables and Figures* which add to or illustrate a Standard or Recommended Practice and which are referred to therein, form part of the associated Standard or Recommended Practice and have the same status.

2.— *Material approved by the Council for publication in association with the Standards and Recommended Practices*:

a) *Forewords* comprising historical and explanatory material based on the action of the Council and including an explanation of the obligations of States with regard to the application of the Standards and Recommended Practices ensuing from the Convention and the Resolution of Adoption;

b) *Introductions* comprising explanatory material introduced at the beginning of parts, chapters or sections of the Annex to assist in the understanding of the application of the text;

c) *Notes* included in the text, where appropriate, to give factual information or references bearing on the Standards or Recommended Practices in question, but not constituting part of the Standards or Recommended Practices;

d) *Attachments* comprising material supplementary to the Standards and Recommended Practices, or included as a guide to their application.