

MEDIA STATEMENT

30 April 2016

The SA Civil Aviation Authority Suspends SA Express' Air Operator Certificate

[Johannesburg]. Following failure to comply with the applicable civil aviation regulations, the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) has suspended SA Express' air operator certificate (AOC). The suspension is effective as of today, Saturday, 30 April 2016.

It is critical to note that this suspension is precautionary and taken in the interest of safety and preventing incidents that can be catastrophic.

The suspension, which is in terms of Part 185 of the Civil Aviation Regulations, pertains to the operator's AOC - N399D, S370D, I/N002, and I/S001.

The suspension follows a series of non-compliances and the SACAA's dissatisfaction with the operator's safety monitoring systems, which are meant to monitor and address any safety deficiencies. The Regulator also found the operator's proposed corrective action plan inadequate as it does not satisfactorily address the findings raised.

The SACAA wishes to point out that recent inspections and audits on the airline's operations have pointed to inefficient safety monitoring systems, and some level of failure by the operator to satisfactorily address concerns raised by the Regulator. The SACAA views the inefficiency of the safety monitoring systems in a serious light as it poses serious safety hazards and risks to the crew, passengers, and the public at large. For this reason, the Regulator cannot allow the operator to continue with operations until such time that the identified safety concerns are adequately addressed.

As much as the SACAA has a duty to help operators comply with applicable regulations, the primary responsibility is on operators to ensure that their operations are safe and secure at all times. Failure to do so is a contravention of the applicable civil aviation regulations. Moreover, aviation safety and security are of paramount importance in this industry; and passengers require some form of assurance that once they board an aircraft they will automatically land safely and hassle-free at their intended destination.

The SACAA wishes to emphasise that it is receiving full cooperation from SA Express and will provide any assistance possible, and within the Regulator's mandate, in order to ensure that the matter is resolved as soon as possible.

As much as the SACAA is fully aware of the effect and disruptions the suspension has on passengers; it is equally important to note that the decision was not taken lightly and is, in fact, in the interest of ensuring that the operator's safety systems are beyond reproach and can offer an acceptable level of safety for passengers and crew.

The SACAA will always remain committed to meeting its obligations and keeping South Africans and those that use the country's airspace safe. The Regulator is also dedicated to upholding the country's impeccable zero percent accident fatality rate in terms of scheduled operations. Unsafe operations have the potential to undermine the growth and development of the aviation industry, as well as the country's highly regarded civil aviation safety and security standards. Aviation safety and security must always be prioritised ahead of commercial gains.

In terms of Part 185 of the civil aviation regulations, the operator has the right to appeal the decision with the Director of Civil Aviation within 30 days from the date of receipt of the suspension notice.

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About the SACAA:

The South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) is a self-funded agency of the Department of Transport tasked with promoting and maintaining a safe, secure, and sustainable civil aviation environment by regulating and overseeing the industry in line with international standards. We perform oversight of various aspects of civil aviation, including, but not limited to aviation security, aviation personnel licensing, aviation infrastructure, and air safety operations.

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