

MEDIA RELEASE

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South African Civil Aviation Authority clears SA Express for take-off

Johannesburg: The South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) has reinstated South African Express' Air Operator Certificate (AOC), clearing the airline for the resumption of operations. This development comes just over a month after the regional airline, based in South Africa, had managed to get its Aircraft Maintenance Organisation (AMO) approval successfully reinstated by the SACAA. With these two crucial certificates successfully reinstated, this means that SA Express can now conduct scheduled commercial operations as an airline.

In addition to successfully reinstating its AOC and AMO certificates, South African Express has also managed to get Certificates of Airworthiness for two of its aircraft. As such, the airline is in the meantime permitted to operate with only two of its aircraft.

Background

On 24 May 2018, the SACAA suspended SA Express's AOC and AMO approvals as well as the Certificates of Airworthiness (CoA) for nine of the twenty-one aircraft on the operator's books. The decision to revoke SA Express permits came after the SACAA had conducted an audit at the airline and its maintenance organisation, which uncovered severe cases of non-compliance that posed serious safety risks.

In order to be allowed to operate as an airline again, SA Express had to undertake recertification processes for both the AOC and AMO approvals. The airline also had to ensure that all aircraft earmarked for operations had a Certificate of Airworthiness.

The AMO and AOC certification process are similar, whereby they both follow a five-phase procedure. In order for a Certificate of Airworthiness to be issued, the aircraft must first be inspected by SACAA officials.

Profitability must be balanced with compliance

"A key message to all operators and aviation personnel is that financial sustainability must always be carefully balanced with the need to uphold, at all times, acceptable levels of aviation safety and security. If the scale is heavily tilted towards one end, the air transport network as we all know it today, will cease to exist," cautions Ms Poppy Khoza, who leads the SACAA as Director of Civil Aviation.

The suspension of SA Express coincided with the launch of the inaugural Civil Aviation Industry Awards, which are aimed at recognising individuals and companies for their outstanding contribution to aviation.

“As much as we have to be firm and undertake our mandate without any fear or prejudice, we equally have a responsibility to occasionally pause and commend those who ensure that millions of people and goods are transported relatively safely and securely. We should not forget that at any given second or minute there is an aircraft taking off or landing somewhere in the world. Every time an aircraft takes off, the lives of people on board are literally in the hands of aviation professionals,” explains Khoza.

She argues that the seamless nature of air transport belies the intricate processes involved in aviation operations.

“As a result of these entrenched, harmonious, and mature aviation processes, we have come to expect that every take-off will result in an incident-free landing. Hence, very few of us pause to ponder how, and who is behind our safe and secure air transportation. The fact is that behind the scenes there are thousands of individuals who carry out critical duties; and until now, there hasn’t been a conscious effort, or at least an effort of this magnitude, by all of us with a vested interest in this industry to acknowledge the contributions of these individuals and companies across all aviation sectors in South Africa,” says Khoza.

According to Khoza, a total of 14 awards are up for grabs, making the awards very inclusive and comprehensive. These prestigious awards will be assessed by an independent judging panel comprising eminent and accomplished individuals chosen for their immense experience, and drawn from various aviation and business disciplines.

A full list of categories, and detailed information about the Civil Aviation Industry Awards, as well as how to enter the Awards, can be accessed via www.civilaviationawards.co.za. Enquiries or questions on clarity regarding the Awards can be emailed to: caia@caa.co.za. Award submissions will be accepted until 10 September 2018. Deserving winners will receive the awards at a glitzy event to be held in October 2018.

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About the SACAA:

The South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) is a Schedule 3A public entity reporting to the Department of Transport established in terms of the Civil Aviation Authority Act, 2009 (Act No 13 of 2009) (the Act). In terms of mandate, the SACAA is tasked with promoting and maintaining a safe, secure and sustainable civil aviation environment, by regulating and overseeing the functioning and development of the industry in an efficient, cost-effective, and customer-friendly manner according to international standards. The SACAA is governed and controlled by the Civil Aviation Authority Board.

About the Civil Aviation Industry Awards:

The Civil Aviation Industry Awards (CAIA) are Awards which are aimed at recognising individuals and companies for their outstanding contribution to aviation.

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