

MEDIA RELEASE

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SA Civil Aviation Authority reissues two CemAir Air Operator Certificates

Johannesburg: The South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) can confirm that, after finally managing to address safety concerns that were raised by the SACAA, CemAir has obtained the necessary approvals for two Air Operator Certificates (AOCs), which give the airline the green light to take back to the skies. The two certificates pave the way for CemAir to conduct operations under Part 121 and Part 135 of the civil aviation regulations.

In aviation, the term 'Part' means specific governing regulations of a particular type of operation. In this case, Part 121 AOC approval means that CemAir can now resume commercial air transport operations with an aircraft that can carry more than 19 passengers. Part 135 AOC approval allows the certificate-holder to conduct commercial air transport operations with an aircraft that can carry up to a maximum of 19 passengers.

The approvals come after a period of divergence between the airline and regulator on regulation compliance matters that included systemic and procedural non-compliances, which led to the suspension of the operator's Part 121 and Part 135 AOCs. After several legal processes, the SACAA eventually continued to finalise the AOCs renewal audit, which is an obligatory audit consistent with its statutory mandate.

The scope and purpose of the audit that was conducted, was to determine whether CemAir continued to comply with the requirements of both Part 135 and Part 121. The renewal of an AOC is not automatic, as it is based on the satisfactory completion of a renewal audit process as stipulated in the South African civil aviation regulations.

During the audit, several discrepancies came to the fore and were brought to the attention of CemAir by means of audit reports. These discrepancies related to, among others, concerns regarding the operator's Aircraft Maintenance Programme (AMP).

Subsequently, further engagements between CemAir and the SACAA ensued, with the aim of addressing the identified shortcomings.

This culminated in the submission of Corrective Action Plans (CAPs), for assessment and approval by the SACAA, aimed at addressing the audit findings. After several interactions, the revised CAPs for both Part 121 and 135 were found to be satisfactory.

In relation to Part 121 AOC, it is worth pointing out that CemAir requested the exclusion of a particular type of aircraft, i.e. the Bombardier CL600-2B19, commonly referred to as CRJ 200, in favour of another aircraft type called DHC-8, commonly known as Dash 8.

Currently CemAir has been issued with AOCs that enable the airline to operate a fleet of six (6) aircraft comprising five (5) Dash 8 that will operate under Part 121 as well as one (1) Bombardier CL600-2D24, commonly referred to as CRJ900. For Part 135 operations, the airline will utilise one Beechcraft 1900D aircraft, and at this point only one aircraft has been approved for operation. Out of a fleet of 21 aircraft, CemAir is authorized to operate only (7) aircraft at this stage. The rest will return to service as and when Cemair presents them to the SACAA for inspection and evaluation and they are found to be compliant.

The SACAA will continue to monitor to ensure that CemAir's operations are compliant to the obligations required for holders of such approvals as prescribed in the civil aviation regulations.

South Africa has maintained a good safety record for over 30 years in the scheduled and airline operations category. This is a remarkable record that the SACAA intends to safeguard without fear, prejudice or favour. Moreover, all operators who carry passengers from one airport to another must ensure at all times that they fully comply with aviation regulations, so that every take-off culminates in an accident-free landing, where passengers get to walk away from the aircraft unharmed.

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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.

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