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**GCAA
ADVISORY CIRCULAR**

**PERSONNEL LICENCING
AC NO: GCAA AC/PEL-001 ISS 2**

**SUBJECT: LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY
REQUIREMENTS**

DATE REVISED: 01-03-2024
REVISED BY: Director, Safety
and Security

1. Purpose:

This Advisor Circular provides information and guidance on the Implementation of the Language Proficiency Requirements required by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and stipulated in the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority Requirements for PEL (Requirements for PEL)

By issue of this Advisory Circular No. GCAA AC/PEL-001 ISS 2, all previous versions of this Advisory Circular issued before March 1, 2024, are effectively cancelled.

2. General:

2.1 Statistics published by ICAO indicate that over the past years hundreds of people lost their lives worldwide in aviation accidents where it was found that insufficient English language proficiency on the part of the flight crew or air traffic controllers had played a contributory role in the chain of events leading to the accidents. As a result, strengthened language proficiency requirements (LPR) were introduced by ICAO in Annex 1 – Personnel Licensing, through which Pilots, remote pilots, flight engineers, flight navigators, air traffic controllers and aeronautical station operators shall demonstrate the ability to speak and understand radiotelephony communications in the English language.,

2.2 Language requirements are also included in *Annexes 6 – Operation of Aircraft, 10 – Aeronautical Telecommunications and 11 – Air Traffic Services* as follows:

- Annex 6 places responsibility on the Operators to “ensure that flight crew members demonstrate the ability to speak and understand the language used for RT communications as specified in Annex 1”.
- Annex 10 stipulates the use of ICAO standardized phraseology in all situations for which it has been specified; and it also includes requirements for the availability of the English language at stations on the ground, and for the use of English language in air-ground RT communications.
- Annex 11 stipulates that Air Traffic Services (ATS) providers ensure that controllers speak and understand the language used for RT communications as specified in Annex 1, and that communications between air traffic control units be in the English language if there is no other mutually agreed language.

2.3 The language proficiency requirements stipulated in Annex 1 – Personnel Licensing, have been incorporated in the Requirements for PEL. 2.2.7

Demonstration of the ability to speak and understand the language used for radiotelephony communications shall be in accordance with the holistic descriptors and the rating scale stated in The Requirements for PEL: 2.2.7 and IS 2.2.7 which are reproduced in the Attachment to this circular for ease of reference.

2.4 ICAO's guidance document on Implementation of the LPR has allowed that native speakers of the English language should be considered expert speakers provided they use a dialect that is intelligible to the aeronautical community. It also states that assessment of airmen at the Expert Level (Level 6) does not necessarily need to be carried out by a language testing specialist. (See rating scale in the Attachment for a description of Levels 4, 5 and 6) While the Authority at the present time does not conduct aviation language testing, it is satisfied that Officers of the Authority who are familiar with the relevant applicable Standards can recognise (assess) persons who are at Level 6.

3. Language Proficiency Evaluation

Note should be taken of the following points that pertain to the language proficiency evaluation:

- i. The requirement for language proficiency evaluation is applicable even to airmen who are native speakers of the English language. (when considered necessary)
- ii. The evaluation will be an assessment of the airman's ability to speak and understand the English language in an aviation context and will NOT be a knowledge test.
- iii. The evaluation of expert speakers is not expected to last more than 10 minutes.
- iv. The evaluation may be conducted over the telephone.
- v. Airmen are reminded that they must use the ICAO standardized phraseology in all situations for which it has been specified. Only when standardized phraseology cannot serve an intended transmission then plain language shall be used. Despite that requirement, the language proficiency evaluation will not be a test of the airman's knowledge of ICAO's standardized phraseology.
- vi. The evaluation will be in accordance with the holistic descriptors in the Requirements for PEL:
IS 2.2.7 [see Attachment].
- vii. Airmen will receive an endorsement to show the level of language proficiency demonstrated.
- viii. Airmen who are assessed to be below Level 6 will be referred for specialized language testing and will have to bear any associated costs.
- ix. In accordance with the Requirements for PEL: 2.2.7 any airman who demonstrates proficiency below Level 6 will be required to undergo further evaluation at intervals as follows:

- a) those demonstrating language proficiency at Level 4 shall be evaluated at least once every three years; and
 - b) those demonstrating language proficiency at Level 5 shall be evaluated at least once every six years.
- xiii. Airmen who demonstrate language proficiency at level 6 would be exempted from further evaluation. (Requirements for PEL: 2.2.7)
- xiv. Airmen who demonstrate language proficiency below Level 4 must undergo remedial English language training until the required proficiency level is achieved.

Note: In this Advisory Circular "airmen" refers to pilots and air traffic controllers.

4. Responsibility of Operators

Operators and ATS providers will be required to ensure that Pilots, remote pilots, flight engineers, flight navigators, air traffic controllers and aeronautical station operators shall demonstrate the ability to speak and understand radiotelephony communications in the English language. Provision of remedial language training will be the responsibility of operators and the flight crew members who are assessed below the acceptable level of language proficiency.


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 Director General
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The Requirements for PEL: 2.2.7

Language Proficiency

- (a) Aeroplane and helicopter pilots, flight engineers, and air traffic controllers shall demonstrate the ability to speak and understand the English language.
- (b) As of 05 March 2008, aeroplane and helicopter pilots, and air traffic controllers shall demonstrate the ability to speak and understand the English language to the level specified in the language proficiency requirements.

The Requirements for PEL: IS 2.2.7

Language Proficiency

(a) General

- (1) To meet the language proficiency requirements contained in 2.2.7, an applicant for a licence or a licence holder shall demonstrate, in a manner acceptable to the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority, compliance with the holistic descriptors in paragraph (b) below and with at least the Operational Level (Level 4) of the Language Proficiency Rating Scale as mentioned in paragraph c) below.

(b) Holistic descriptors: Proficient speakers shall:

- (1) communicate effectively in voice-only (telephone/radiotelephone) and in face-to-face situations;
- (2) communicate on common, concrete and work-related topics with accuracy and clarity;
- (3) use appropriate communicative strategies to exchange messages and to recognize and resolve misunderstandings (e.g. to check, confirm, or clarify information) in a general or work-related context;
- (4) handle successfully and with relative ease the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine work situation or communication task with which they are otherwise familiar; and
- (5) use a dialect or accent which is intelligible to the aeronautical community.

(c) Rating scale:

(1) Operational Level (Level 4):

- (i) **Pronunciation:** Pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation but only sometimes interfere with understanding.

- (ii) **Structure:** Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are used creatively and are usually well controlled. Errors may occur, particularly in unusual or unexpected circumstances, but rarely interfere with meaning.
- (iii) **Vocabulary:** Vocabulary range and accuracy are usually sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, and work related topics. Can often paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary in unusual or unexpected circumstances.
- (iv) **Fluency:** Produces stretches of language at an appropriate tempo. There may be occasional loss of fluency on transition from rehearsed or formulaic speech to spontaneous interaction, but this does not prevent effective communication. Can make limited use of discourse markers or connectors. Fillers are not distracting.
- (v) **Comprehension:** Comprehension is mostly accurate on common, concrete, and work related topics when the accent or variety used is sufficiently intelligible for an international community of users. When the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events, comprehension may be slower or require clarification strategies.
- (vi) **Interaction:** Responses are usually immediate, appropriate and informative. Initiates and maintains exchanges even when dealing with an unexpected turn of events. Deals adequately with apparent misunderstandings by checking, confirming or clarifying.

(2) Extended Level (Level 5)

- (i) **Pronunciation:** Pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation though influenced by the first language or regional variation, rarely interfere with ease of understanding.
- (ii) **Structure:** Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled. Complex structures are attempted but with errors which sometimes interfere with meaning.
- (iii) **Vocabulary:** Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, and work related topics. Paraphrases consistently and successfully. Vocabulary is sometimes idiomatic.
- (iv) **Fluency:** Able to speak at length with relative ease on familiar topics, but may not vary speech flow as a stylistic device. Can make use of appropriate discourse markers or connectors.
- (v) **Comprehension:** Comprehension is accurate on common, concrete, and work related topics and mostly accurate when the speaker is confronted with linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events. Is able to comprehend a range of speech varieties (dialect and/or accent) or registers.
- (vi) **Interaction:** Responses are immediate, appropriate and informative. Manages the speaker/listener relationship effectively.

(3) Extended Level (Level 6)

- (i) **Pronunciation:** Pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation though possibly influenced by the first language or regional variation, almost never interfere with ease of understanding.
- (ii) **Structure:** Both basic and complex grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled.
- (iii) **Vocabulary:** Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on a wide variety of familiar and unfamiliar topics. Vocabulary is idiomatic, nuanced, and sensitive to register.
- (iv) **Fluency:** Able to speak at length with a natural, effortless flow. Varies speech flow for stylistic effect, e.g. to emphasize a point. Uses appropriate discourse markers and connectors spontaneously.
- (v) **Comprehension:** Comprehension is consistently accurate in nearly all contexts and includes comprehension of linguistic and cultural subtleties.
- (vi) **Interaction:** Interacts with ease in nearly all situations. Is sensitive to verbal and non-verbal cues, and responds to them appropriately.