

August 9, 2023

Air Consultations
Canadian Transportation Agency
60 Laval Street
Gatineau, QC
J8X 3G9

Re: Consultation Response

While the airline industry in Canada seeks to become standardized, there are unique challenges in northern remote operations. In the southern region, there are competitive support services for an air carrier, whereas the infrastructure in Northern Communities creates many barriers. Both regions cannot be held to the same standard. Many airlines operating in northern remote areas provide an essential service, additional penalties only create additional challenges and operators would have to increase fees to offset additional APPR costs.

Further clarification is required for the proposed amendments:

Exceptional circumstances:

- **Weather or other atmospheric conditions, or natural disasters, that make it impossible to safely operate the flight.** What are the criteria and who would adjudicate the requirement to “make it impossible to safely operate the flight? Without defined criteria, there may be different interpretations by each air carrier. Airlines operating in Northern areas are challenged with the lack of infrastructure and numerous variables such as weather impacting runway surfaces.

Circumstances that would not be considered exceptional:

- **Flight crew or cabin crew unavailability.** Clarification that flight/cabin crew unavailability due to IRROP's would not be applicable. This could have potential safety considerations with crews being subjected to commercial pressures.
- **Technical problems that are an inherent part of normal airline operations.** How can airlines differentiate manufacturing defects and technical problems? How can a third-party platform be considered “not exemptional?” Who would adjudicate or how would an airline justify the technical issue is not an inherent part of normal airline operations?
- **Any action, or failure to act, by the airline or others with which the airline has a contractual relationship.** In Northern remote locations, typically there is only one service provider with no other available options. When the service provider does not meet their contractual obligations, how could this be considered not exceptional?

PROPOSED APPR CHANGES

Rebooking small airlines: small airlines must rebook the passenger on their own or a partner airline's next available flight within 24 hours. If that's not possible, they must book with another airline leaving from that airport. Many northern remote communities are only served by one airline that provides an essential service. There is no option to book with another airline. Consideration must be given for an exception to this requirement for northern remote operations.

After 48 hours, all airlines must rebook the passenger on any airlines leaving from a nearby airport, if there is one. They must get the passenger to the other airport at no charge. What is the definition of “nearby”? Many nearby communities are various hours away with limited transportation means between communities. Small northern remote communities are only served by one airline that provides an essential service. There is no option to book with another airline. Consideration must be given for an exception to this requirement for northern remote operations.

Airlines confirm/ask for passengers’ preferred means of communication, such as their cell number or email, at check-in, so that passengers can receive detailed information without delay in the event of a flight disruption. Many remote community members rely on social media to communicate, rather than phone or email. In many cases for medical related travel, third party agencies are responsible for booking passengers. Additionally, some passengers have access to neither cell phones or email.

Thank you for the consultation. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards

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