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AIC  
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**AIRCRAFT FUEL STATUS AND  
COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Currently ICAO does not have any standards regarding the communication of the fuel status of an aircraft. The only recognised procedure when an aircraft has a fuel emergency is for the pilot to declare a 'PAN' or 'MAYDAY'. However many pilots use various phrases to indicate their fuel status to ATC, e.g. 'short of fuel', 'critical fuel' or 'minimum fuel', often with an expectation that they will be given priority handling.
- 1.2 To resolve this safety issue, ICAO will introduce new fuel management procedures for pilots and standard R/T phraseology for Minimum Fuel and Fuel Emergency events for pilots and controllers.
- 1.3 This AIC details pilot and ATC procedures and the new R/T phraseology with regard to the fuel status of an aircraft in accordance with the amendments to ICAO Annex 6, 'Aircraft Operations' and Doc 4444, 'PANS-ATM' that will come into effect on **15 November 2012**.

**2. Minimum Fuel**

- 2.1 A pilot shall declare '**MINIMUM FUEL**' when having committed to land at a specific airport, the pilot calculates that any change to the existing ATC clearance to that airport may result in landing with less than planned final reserve fuel.
- 2.2 **Minimum Fuel is not an emergency situation** and the pilot should not expect any form of priority handling. The aircraft can still operate normally in accordance with the last clearance, but is **committed to land at the nominated airport** and cannot divert to another airport. However, if the aircraft is subject to any subsequent delay, or when an Estimated Approach Time (EAT) has been issued and additional delay is expected, an emergency situation could develop.

### 3. Fuel Emergency

- 3.1 A pilot shall declare ‘**MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY FUEL**’ when the calculated usable fuel predicted to be available after landing at the nearest airport is less than the planned final reserve fuel.
- 3.2 **This is an emergency and the aircraft shall be given priority over other traffic in the landing sequence.** The aircraft will be committed to a landing, as in the event of any delay or a go-around, there may be insufficient fuel remaining for a safe landing.

### 4. Standard Phraseology

- 4.1 The new standard phraseology shall be used in a MINIMUM FUEL or FUEL EMERGENCY event is as follows:

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Pilot transmission      | <i>(c/s) MINIMUM FUEL</i>  |
| Controller transmission | <i>(c/s) ROGER [NO DELAY EXPECTED or EXPECT (delay information)]</i> |
| Pilot transmission      | <i>(c/s) MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY FUEL</i>                             |
| Controller transmission | <i>(c/s) MAYDAY FUEL ROGER</i>                                       |

*(c/s – Aircraft Callsign)*

### 5. Holding Procedures

- 5.1 ATC will advise pilots of ‘no delay’ to commencing an approach when any anticipated traffic management, e.g. radar vectors or holding, will be for a period of **up to 15 minutes**. (This procedure caters for sequencing traffic after a runway change, the re-positioning of traffic after a missed approach or a brief peak traffic period, etc.) However, if an aircraft is instructed to hold, prior to entering the holding pattern the pilot will be given an EAT, or a time at which to expect onward clearance, no matter what the expected delay.

### 6. Other Considerations

- 6.1 Operators are reminded that adverse weather conditions that may affect Hong Kong can be extensive and similarly affect the nearby airports at Macao, Shenzhen and Guangzhou. Under such conditions, if any of these airports have been nominated as an alternate, consideration should be given to an en-route diversion to another airport prior to entering Hong Kong airspace.

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By direction of the Director-General of Civil Aviation  
Norman LO