European Union Aviation Safety Agency

FAQ n.48610

FAQs:

Passenger safety briefing, Passenger Safety, Air Operations, Regulations

Question:

Is there any requirement on what language(s) should be used for information provided to passengers via safety briefings and announcements?

Answer:

Reference: Regulation (EU) No 965/2012 Air Operations, Annex III: Part-ORO is available on EASA website. ICAO Doc 10086 Manual on information and instructions for passenger safety is available on ICAO website.

Regulation (EU) No 965/2012 mandates the operator to ensure that briefings and demonstrations related to safety are provided to passengers in a form that facilitates the application of the procedures applicable in case of an emergency and that passengers are provided with a safety briefing card on which picture type-instructions indicate the operation of emergency equipment and exits likely to be used by passengers. It is therefore the operator's responsibility to choose the languages to be used on its flights, which may vary depending on the destination or a known passenger profile. It is indeed difficult, if not impossible, to accommodate every 'required' language on board as this differs on daily basis from a flight to flight. For example, a German airline has a flight departing from Frankfurt to Rome and it is assumed that the most required languages on this flight will be German and Italian. The passenger profile may, however, be such that these languages are not 'desired' on this flight as passengers do not necessarily speak or understand any of the two languages (passengers may be e.g. Irish, Canadian, Russian, Chinese, Iranian, Egyptian, Pakistani, Latvian, Finnish, Croatian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Czech, Slovak, etc., or there is a large group of e.g. Japanese tourists). It is therefore a practice of some operators to employ 'language speakers', i.e. cabin crew members speaking certain languages, who mainly operate their language-desired route(s). The aircraft may also have an option of a multi-language pre-recorded set of public announcements, the operator may choose this feature when modifying the cabin systems on its aircraft configuration.

ICAO Doc 10086 recommends that information provided to passengers via safety briefings, announcements and safety demonstrations should be transmitted in the language of the operator and in English to promote appropriate communication with passengers. Further, that

in order to cover the largest percentage of passengers on board on international flights, the operator should consider the use of English and the use of the official language of the State of departure and destination. In addition, the operator should consider the language(s) of the passengers on board and assign language-qualified cabin crew members or interpreters on board the aircraft, on specific routes. The operator should verify that emergency exit-row occupants comprehend the language spoken by the crew.

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