

## Summary on Manual on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families (Doc 9973)

During its 32nd Session in October 1998, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Assembly considered the subject of assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families.

Family assistance is the provision of services and information to address the concerns and the needs of the aircraft accident victims and their families.

Providers of family assistance are entities having a role in providing such assistance to accident victims and their families, such as: government departments and agencies of the State where the accident occurred; the air operator; the airport operators; third parties (e.g. non-governmental aid agencies and commercial companies); and family associations.

Defining who constitutes family will involve cultural and legal considerations as well as social relationships and may well be different to what is generally covered by such terms as “legal next of kin” (i.e. that person legally responsible for the estate of the deceased). A definition must be agreed upon that is flexible enough to take due account of the cultures involved.

A victim is an occupant of the aircraft, or any person outside the aircraft, who is unintentionally directly involved in the aircraft accident. Victims may include the crew, revenue passengers, non-revenue passengers and third parties.

Family assistance planners and providers must recognize that the families and the survivors may have diverse cultural backgrounds and values that require special understanding and consideration. These considerations may include the grieving process, the form of, and attendance at, religious services, the treatment of human remains and the design of memorials.

Apprehension for the families and the survivors of aircraft accidents and awareness of their need for assistance have becoming increasingly important international social and political issues.

States and air operators that have neither the resources nor the means of providing a comprehensive family assistance plan should consider entering into appropriate cooperative arrangements with others in order to develop a family assistance plan.

A detailed, well-considered plan that is periodically exercised is critical to the provision of family assistance because the need to provide such assistance may occur with little or no warning, requiring an immediate response, and may involve large numbers of trained personnel, significant expense and the use of dedicated resources.

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