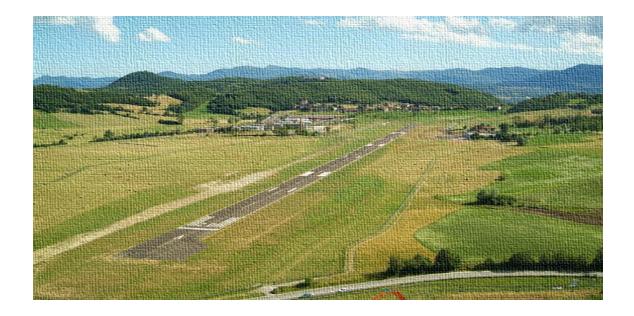**Number: 2023/004-APT**

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These Guidelines include general elements for areas not covered within ENAC regulations.

Interpretative/procedural/methodological criteria are provided by ENAC without any indication of preference and it is up to those who request this document to determine how best to meet any of the requirements therein, according to their own situation.

Technical information refers to common practises on specific topics relating to aircrafts, infrastructure, flight operations, etc.

These Guidelines can be published as a stand-alone document providing technical and procedural indications to implement experimental certification/approval processes prior to the publication of Regulations. ENAC verifies the maintenance of the compliance requirements established in these guidelines and accepted by the users.

Guidelines and best practises for the development and management of the airport assistance plan for aircraft accident victims and their families

CENTRAL DIRECTORATE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COORDINATION, SAFETY, SECURITY AND RESEARCH
DIRECTOR: Mrs. Giovanna Laschena

APPLICABILITY
APT – AIRPORT OPERATORS
ATM – N.A.
EAL – AIR TRANSPORTATION AND AIRPORTS
LIC – N.A.
MED – N.A.
NAV – N.A.
OPV – N.A.
SEC – N.A.

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PREFACE

This document is the result of the joint work conducted by ENAC, "*Comitato e Fondazione 8 ottobre*" and TT&A (with the participation of Mr. Patrick Trancu). It is intended to be an operational tool to facilitate the development and management of airport plans for assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families, in line with the ENAC "Regulation on assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families". The indications contained in this document are not prescriptive, but rather they can help guide in the approach to plans and their management, while developing a culture of conscious and appropriate support and assistance.

At the beginning of various paragraph there are quotations from some of the victims' relatives of the Linate accident of 8 October 2001, that are most significant in relation to the subject addressed.

INTRODUCTION

"Virgilio helps Dante go through hell. Hell would have been the same, but having a guide would have made a difference" (a daughter)

Assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families can be defined as the ability to provide information, resources and services to support the people involved in an aircraft accident, including passengers, crew members, people on the ground, victims' families and/or friends.

The objective of this document is to support aviation stakeholders in developing and implementing effective plans and programmes of assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families. It provides contextual information, specific recommendations, and a set of guidelines and check-lists. The approach in this document is based both on key principles developed from the Italian experience and international best practices.

Every aircraft accident presents specific problems and critical issues, different and unpredictable variables, multiple intervention types and specific responses, which become even more evident when referring to the need to provide assistance to those involved, particularly victims and their families. Therefore, it is not possible to determine a single model for the provision of assistance. It is appropriate to identify a flexible and adaptive plan, through which it is possible to take care of those involved and their needs in an effective and compassionate manner, also considering that departure, destination, alternate, and/or connecting airports can be involved, depending on the event.

Moreover, given the complexity of the aviation sector and its international nature, an array of variables deeply influencing the response to an emergency need to be considered, including different types of aircrafts and people from different cultures with families to be contacted from all over the world.

In the early stages following an aircraft accident, for example, it may not be immediately possible to know procedures and timelines with which the air carrier (or air carriers) involved will respond to the event which includes providing assistance to families who go to the airport seeking information about their loved ones.

As the accident at Milan Linate of 8 October 2001 sadly demonstrated, airports (understood to be systems of public and private entities) involved in a response to an aircraft accident need to adopt a plan for assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families (hereinafter "assistance plan"). The plan aims to ensure effective action starting from the first moments immediately following the accident.

Therefore, the purpose of this document is to provide guidance for ensuring proper and effective assistance, also addressing the four most common needs of family members in the event of an accident:

1. Initial notification of a person's involvement in the accident;
2. Determination of the number of people involved;
3. Access to resources and information;
4. Collecting and safely keeping of personal effects.

In addition, the document focuses on several necessary forms of support, such as:

- Basic physical needs (e.g. medical care, protection from intrusions, food and water, dry clothes, blankets);
- Emotional and/or social needs (e.g. communicating or reuniting with their loved ones, psychological and/or spiritual support);
- Practical and/or logistic needs (e.g. recovering their belongings, obtaining temporary lodging, continuing their journey).

PLANNING, PREPARATION AND RESPONSE

All mainly involved parties – ENAC, air carrier, airport operator, other institutional entities, ground handler service providers, non-profit associations and third-party personnel selected to provide psycho-social support – are called upon to actively collaborate and engage in an ongoing planning and preparation process which includes, but not limited to:

- creation, maintenance and updating of the plan;
- preparatory practice of the plan, drills, etc;
- plan review for validation and/or critical revision, in accordance with the results of the practice sessions or actual events occurred.
- Identification of resources and regular training of the designated personnel.

Planning and preparation

"I remember the lack of organisation, mass confusion, you could not understand where to go, people were overwhelmed, torn apart, screaming, in disbelief. …...." (a daughter)

In the hours immediately following an air accident, pressing, urgent and significant needs for assistance do arise not only for the people directly involved, but also for their families ~~who will be~~ at the departure and destination airports, as well as the accident site. Families will already be on the site, having just seen their loved ones depart or they will be awaiting their arrival. In such situations, airports are the first place the family members of the victims think of to seek information about their loved ones even though the accident has occurred elsewhere - particularly true when they cannot obtain information in any other way. Airports should be prepared to accommodate potentially large numbers of people wanting this information and also be prepared to provide adequate forms of privacy protection for victims and their families, protecting them from journalists and any other intruders.

Moreover, the plan on assistance to victims and their families focuses on the following aspects:
⇒ Identification of the victims and notification of involvement to close family members;
⇒ Collection and handling of information;
⇒ Coordination with local command and control centres (i.e. Advanced Command Post; Emergency Operation Centre);
⇒ Activation, set-up and management of receiving rooms or areas for passengers, crew members, passengers' families (and, if applicable, for people affected on the ground), crew's families;
⇒ Transfer of non-hospitalized survivors to assistance rooms;
⇒ Transfer of family members to reserved receiving rooms;
⇒ Coordination with the air carriers involved and their ground service providers;
⇒ Reunification of the survivors with their family;
⇒ Psychosocial support to the people involved;
⇒ Communication with the people involved;
⇒ Communication with the media;
⇒ Activation of the Airport Contact Team, a number of different airport public and private entities (in order to fulfil the tasks provided for in article 4.4 point 3 of the Regulation).

The four response phases

"We lived, I can't even say how many minutes, in this suspended time, during which no one even looked at the clock, and we all kept staring at the door waiting for someone to arrive and give us information (a wife)

Response to an air accident can be divided into four main phases:

1. Immediate (from 0 to 4 hours);
2. Short-term (from 4 to 12 hours);
3. Extended (from 12 to 24 hours);
4. Medium long-term.

*"..Because we felt as if we were bothering people... When we arrived, we were "welcomed", so to speak, and then taken away…nobody wanted us around." (*a wife*)*

1. Immediate response (from 0 a 4 hours)
In this timeframe, response to the accident focuses on technical and medical rescue operations, with resources mainly focused on securing people and the accident site, followed by the transportation of the survivors to hospital and/or airport assistance rooms. To this end, it is absolutely necessary that all personnel involved in the response are promptly alerted and aware of their roles and responsibilities.

With respect to assistance to people involved (passengers, crew members, families, etc.), the activities of the airport response system (and of the air carrier involved, where present, or its representative) concern activating, setting up and staffing assistance and receiving rooms (all or part of them depending on the scenario) are defined as follows:

a) **Passengers assistance room**
b) **Families receiving room**
c) **Crew assistance room**
d) **Crew families' receiving room**
e) **Reunification area**

"We hardly managed to get in, someone from the staff took us to a small room…" (a father)

For the correct identification of the rooms, the following factors should be considered:

- **size** (one or more rooms) on the basis of number of passengers of the largest airplane operating at that airport. It can be a training, conference, lounge or meeting room, a terminal area, a hangar, etc.
- **security** (it can be quickly protected) since the room must be protected from the public and media, it should be located in a reserved, separate and if possible peripheral area, with restricted access and guarded by Law Enforcement officers and Airport Security staff. Only authorized and identifiable persons should have access to the room.
- *comfort* (heating and air-conditioning, as well as availability of restrooms and comfort items);
- **accessibility** (the room should be accessible to persons with disabilities and reduced mobility);
- **privacy** (the room should allow the survivors to leave the airport in a private and discreet manner, once they have reunited with their family members);

The rooms should be staffed with at least:

⇒ Airport operator's personnel for tasks relating to reception and registration of families, logistic support and supply of basic necessities and comfort items;

⇒ Law Enforcement and Airport Security officers for the protection of the rooms and control of access to the said areas;

Moreover, if available, medical and psychosocial support staff according to the timelines of intervention as established between the airport operator and third parties referred to in art. 4.6 of Regulation.

In order to plan personnel in the rooms, the Airport operator should indicate:

⇒ The minimum number of persons required for each room

⇒ How to activate and coordinate the assigned personnel

⇒ The person responsible for coordination

⇒ The communications devices to be used (radio, mobile phones, etc.)

⇒ Work schedules and shifts

It is recommended to indicate coordinators' names as well as the aforementioned procedures in the plan.

Registration of information

Staff members, identified by the Airport operator in its selection and training programme for assistance in the rooms, with the support of Law Enforcement, Airport Security personnel and emergency psychologists (once they have arrived) will record personal information of the survivors, and if necessary, of any particular conditions related to their state of health.

For this activity, there is no specific form to be used. Since an airport is generally served by multiple airlines and general aviation customers, it is recommended that a standard paper or digital registration form be used to record personal information (possibly using that of the air carrier involved, if applicable).

Assistance

In addition to psychosocial support provided by specialized associations and third parties indicated in the plan, it is also necessary to understand the importance of meeting basic physical needs of passengers in the room. To this end, supply of comfort items should be considered as described in the example list of **annex 3** of this document.

The plan should indicate where the set-up material is located and who is responsible for its maintenance and transportation to the rooms.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that survivors may also include pets that were travelling with passengers. The impossibility of reuniting with their pets missing on the flight can be very traumatic for air accident victims. Therefore, also this type of need should be considered.

Finally, management of parking spaces for the vehicles of the people involved, including their families who arrive at the airport, should be provided.

Room signs

Families going to the airport to seek information about their loved ones are likely to be shocked and confused. The Airport operator, with the support of Law Enforcement agencies, should plan the placement of personnel in the first airport contact locations where families can gather. For instance:

- Information counter;
- Check-in area or check-in desks of the air carrier involved;
- Airport or air carrier ticketing counter;
- Lost & Found counter.

Premises and related procedures for people gathering at the airport should be provided so that they can be escorted to the receiving room as soon as possible, ensuring their protection once identified. The support of Law Enforcement officers has a crucial role in protecting families' privacy and preventing curious onlookers and representatives of the media from entering the room.

Information about the flight status should be displayed on the airport screens, providing specific indications to direct those concerned to the designated gathering place. If the room is located in a remote area, vehicles should be made available for transporting them from the gathering point to the room.

The receiving room should be clearly signposted.

The plan should specify where signposts are stored and who is responsible for their maintenance and transport to the rooms.

a) Passengers assistance room

After initial triage assessment, passengers who are classified as green code are directed to the passenger assistance room for registration and given a distinctive recognisable indicator which proves having completed the registration process. It can be a badge, bracelet, lanyard, QR code, or something else, as long as it is the same object for everyone registered. This form of identification can also prevent unauthorized people from staying inside the room.

Buses should be made available to transport non-hospitalized passengers from the triage area to the passenger assistance room.

b) Families receiving room

After being registered, family members should be provided with a distinctive sign in order to be identified if necessary (as previously described).

Any information regarding a specific victim should be given to family members in a confidential manner, preferably in a reserved area near the reception room.

Moreover, additional needs of those involved should be addressed, such as needs related to other family members (e.g. minor children at home or at school, family members requiring assistance). To this end, it would be appropriate to integrate the plan with a set of questions to be asked of family members (see annex 2 to this document).

c) Crew Assistance Room

Non-hospitalized surviving crew members should be assisted in a separate and secure area, away from passenger and family rooms, where they can contact their families, receive and provide information to their Company and representatives, and be heard by the investigation authority, when required.

Crew members should also receive psychosocial support similar to that provided in the other receiving rooms, including also the activation of trauma management protocols as soon as possible.

d) Crew families' receiving room

It is recommended that crew members' families be received in a reserved and secure area, away from the rooms for victims and their families, where they can obtain information about the status of their loved ones.

They should also receive social and psychological support similar to that provided in other receiving rooms. Likewise, in this room comfort services should be offered as those indicated for the assistance room for victims' families.

Moreover, additional needs of the people involved should be addressed, such as those related to other family members (e.g. minor children at home or at school, persons requiring assistance).

e) Reunification area

The Reunification area is a place where accident survivors can reunite with their family members. When choosing such a location, it is necessary to take into account the needs of the people involved, in terms of confidentiality, privacy and protection. It should be located preferably close to the passengers or families' assistance rooms.

2. Short-term response (from 4 to 12 hours)

During this timeframe, usually from 4 to 12 hours, technical and medical rescue operations are close to completion; afterwards, the site is secured for the subsequent investigation activities. Assistance to victims and their families will continue at the airport, where the number of people gathering may increase as the accident news spreads.

Information management becomes crucial in the activities carried out in the assistance and receiving rooms. The Contact Team should continue to conduct briefings at regular intervals. The Personnel in charge of the rooms will also keep collecting useful data and information and receiving those arriving (especially in the families' receiving room and in the crew families' receiving room).

The air carrier will have activated its own plan and mobilized its resources. It will set up a toll-free number for information requests. Amongst the activities, Special Assistance Team members of the air carrier will get to the accident site so as to establish its Family Assistance Centre (generally not earlier than 12 hours).

3. Extended response (from 12 to 24 hours)

During this timeframe, most assistance activities should be carried out outside the airport and the ordinary airport operations should gradually resume. The air carrier involved will have established and started, with its own staff, the operations of its Family Assistance Centre, where families and friends will be taken. Reunification process will be about to end and at the same time identification of the deceased and return of the bodies will begin. Non-hospitalized survivors will request to recover their personal effects and continue their journey or return home. The activated rooms will be closed and returned to their original function.

4. Assistance in mid-long term

Once the expected response for the first 24 hours is completed, a new recovery phase will begin, during which (1 day - 2 weeks) airport operations will return to full normality and the involved local staff will get back to their usual duties. For a further period of time, media's attention, operations at the accident site and arriving families may still impact the airport, but the management of assistance will be entirely entrusted to the air carrier involved.

In this phase, the plan should provide a specific *defusing* activity and, if applicable, psychological support for all operators involved in the accident management so as to prevent any risk of secondary victimisation.

Afterwards, post-recovery phase will begin. This is the final and multi-year phase of the assistance process which includes various activities such as restoring the accident site, dedicating memorials and monuments, and organizing commemorative celebrations by the victims' families on the anniversaries.

COMMUNICATION

"We were surrounded by confusing and fragmentary news, where everything and its opposite were being said" (a daughter)

Following an air accident, airport staff will be called upon to assist families and survivors. A coordinated programme of assistance to families focuses on both the processes required to effectively assist them and on methods, strategies and skills for an effective communication with family members and survivors. The first step for an effective communication is to understand what information will be necessary.

Family members

Some research conducted in the aftermath of air accidents has identified family members' concerns immediately after the occurrence. The following chart summarizes the main ones.

Main concerns	Questions that might be asked
Initial notification of involvement (notification that a family member is on the passenger list or that an aircraft has been involved in an accident)	- What happened? - Where did it happen? - Was the name of my loved one on the passenger list? - Was he/she on board?

Main concerns	Questions that might be asked
Where the family member is (determine where he/she is and in what conditions)	- Where is my loved one? - Is he/she alive? How is he/she? - What hospital is he/she in? - Can I see her/him? - When will they be identified?
Access to information and resources	- Who can I call to have information? - Who can I contact to have psychological, emotional or spiritual support? - What happens now? - Can I go to the accident site?
Personal effects	- Where are his/her personal effects?

Fonte: Slater e Hall, 1997.

Victims

Generally, **survivors** have different concerns, such as access to information, resources, and recovery of their personal effects from the aircraft (see the chart below).

Main concerns	Questions that might be asked
Access to information and resources	- If I leave the airport, who can I call for information? - How can I get to my final destination? - Who can book hotel accommodation for me? - Who can I contact to have psychological, emotional or spiritual support?
Personal effects	- Where are my personal effects? - How can I have a new passport? - Who will refund me for the lost personal effects?

Airport Contact Team

"I had the impression that nobody had the courage to tell us what had happened" (a daughter)

Regardless of the type of aircraft disaster, the needs for information of the affected people are the same. Accurate and timely information is fundamental when working with survivors, families and

friends. The Airport Contact Team is responsible for providing information briefings in the reception rooms.

Some of this assistance and logistic information can be pre-printed on large posters or included in brochures. Thereby passengers can become aware of what to expect and what type of assistance will be provided.

Briefings should be short and include information such as:

- Explanation about how reunification with their loved ones will take place;
- Actions undertaken for the survivors;
- Explanation about the available services and provided psychosocial assistance.

Airport Contact Team members should consider the following:

⇒ Information should be specific, relevant and provided as early as possible;

⇒ Use a simple language, avoiding technical jargon and acronyms;

⇒ Respect commitments as regards providing information (for instance, if the families are promised that they will be updated in 30 minutes, meet them even if there are no updates).

⇒ Inform the survivors and their families before informing the media and the public.

⇒ Provide specific information about the response process; this is particularly important if information regarding the air accident is limited.

Call centres

Following an airplane disaster, Airport operators may expect that their telephone systems will be overloaded. In cases when the Air carrier has not yet activated its own toll-free number or has a limited answer capacity, the involved airports may handle an overwhelming inbound call volume. Families will likely call any published airport telephone number, therefore in the event of air accident, all airport staff (public and private entities) should know how to direct the calls. The assistance programme for families at the airport should indicate the call flow, recommended language and follow-up procedures.

- **Work flow:** How many employees does the Airport operator have available (are they able to allocate resources quickly)? What information about the caller should the switchboard operator collect? (name, contact details, passenger being inquired about)? Is the call operator able to take a message?

- **Language:** Is there a general greeting when answering the phone? What questions are to be asked? What empathetic words are used? When can the caller expect updated information? Will airport operator staff call back? And if not, who should be contacted for further information?

- **Follow-up:** How do the employees manage the information collected from the caller? (who do they share the information with? Will they share this information with the airline or air operator? Is there a way to track or record the calls? Is a duty of airport operator employee to call back the caller? If so, who will make the call and when? How can the airport operator keep track of the call-back?

Recommendations

- Avoid the use of voicemail systems. In fact, recorded phone calls are often forgotten and unanswered.
- Be prepared to handle a high volume of calls. Airport operators with limited resources should consider agreements for transferring calls to an external partner.
- Telephone numbers dedicated to information for the families should be different from the numbers published for handling calls from the journalists.
- In case of on-hold messages, they should be reprogrammed to provide families with dedicated contact numbers.

Communication guidelines

"Nobody, but nobody, ever told me, "I am sorry"" (a wife)

Communicating with a person who is going through significant emotional distress requires empathetic and compassionate understanding. Here below are some basic principles that can help have an appropriate behaviour towards air accident victims or their family members.

Confidentiality

In accordance with current privacy regulations and in full respect of the grief and dignity of the involved families, it is important that conversations and information exchange between airport staff and family members remain confidential, and particularly that the reason for any information requests and their intended use is specified.

In addition, if required, the person concerned should be allowed to review the collected notes and agree on their documentation. Information should be operational, specific and devoid of any personal impressions on the person concerned.

The assistance plan should also consider the procedure for correct management, storage and elimination of personal information. This procedure should include:

⇒ Establishing privacy policies for all information collected within emergency management;

⇒ Developing confidentiality statements to be included in assistance programmes for the families, to ensure that the assigned staff respect the right to privacy (for example, not sharing with friends the stories of the people involved);

⇒ Instructing the staff not to leave documents in an open and accessible area

⇒ Storing documents in a secure place (identify lockable cabinets or areas)

⇒ Consulting with the *Data Protection Officer* or the *Data Protection Committee* on how to properly store or eliminate the documents once the response has been completed and the airline or the authorities in charge no longer need the documents.

Verbal and non- verbal communication

"Damn! But we are talking about human beings who are in there" (a daughter)

When working with families and survivors, an effective method to establish a relationship is to speak in a low voice, keeping eye contact. Both verbal and non-verbal communication skills are important to bear in mind when dealing with people processing a trauma of an air accident. Shock, distraction and inability to memorize information provided to them are normal reactions in such high-stress conditions.

Annex 2 shows, as an example, some useful relevant indications.

In the first hours following an air accident, it is very likely that official news regarding the status of the people involved may not be available. Therefore, assistance staff should pay the utmost attention to the words they choose when speaking with the people affected. It is recommended to speak in the present tense and prefer "loved ones" rather than "victims" terms. When referring to the individuals involved, it is better to use their first name.

It is not necessary to respond to every comment or reaction of the people involved. In such cases, silence, listening and physical presence including contact (if it is accepted by religious/cultural customs) are more effective in terms of support (see annex 2).

Staff members should pay attention to physical closeness, the use of eye contact and hand gestures. If possible, they should sit at eye level with the person they are talking to; sitting side by side suggests equality and allows conversation to flow more smoothly.

Following an air accident, various emotions and different behaviours are expected. Annex 2 of this document specifies some examples of appropriate communication behaviours to be used in such situations.

Linguistic, religious and cultural considerations

When working with people of different nationalities and in situations where gender, geographic origin, religion or cultural aspects may be sensitive, communication requires tact and prudence. Airport and rescue personnel should be trained on topics such as cultural sensitivity and diversity, because it will facilitate the communication after an air disaster.

The availability of personnel able to translate in an emergency situation is essential. The assistance plan should include how to meet needs for translation and interpretation.

Use of Social Media

For the privacy protection of all people involved, survivors and families should be encouraged not to post photos, videos, stories, *reels* and similar on the social media.

For example, it can be useful to put signposts with the request not to use social media and include this information in briefings to ensure everyone is aware.

TRAINING

"I was getting very angry to those who had not done their job, and were not entitled to do such a job" (a father)

The personnel providing assistance to victims and their families should be selected and properly trained, also considering religious and cultural aspects of the people involved as well as any disabilities.

In case staff members show signs of discomfort or stress following the accident, or are suffering from personal issues unrelated to the accident (e.g. mourning), they should not be involved in the provision of assistance in order to preserve their performance and protect them from further trauma.

All potentially involved personnel should receive basic training aimed at developing awareness, knowledge and competencies required for facing complex and delicate organizational and human situations. The goal is to develop the necessary skills to identify first and significant needs of the victims and their families in the immediate aftermath of an accident in order to provide comprehensive assistance on psychological, bureaucratic, legal, and, above all, human aspects.

In consideration of the high turn-over characterizing some airport roles, it is necessary to implement informative campaigns supported by printed materials, brochures that can also be disseminated on line. With clarity, simplicity and immediacy, this will provide all necessary basic information to manage the complexity of an emergency following an aviation accident.

General aspects

Assistance to victims and their families is a complex and very psycho-emotionally engaging activity. Therefore, a multilevel and structured approach of raising awareness on the topic is required. This includes adopting a psychosocial perspective for all operators potentially involved, integrating technical and procedural skills with attention to emotional and relational aspects in an emergency situation.

All assistance staff should be properly and regularly trained, with recurrent training sessions at least every two years.

The training should enable staff members to:

- Be familiar with the assistance plan, the assigned roles and responsibilities;
- Have the opportunity to learn and enhance the skills required for the emergency response
- Promote the development of the basic knowledge and skills required to provide initial assistance to victims and their families.

The training programme should use scenarios, role plays and interactive methods to help participants understand the impact they will have on the survivors and families after an air disaster. They ensure that the participants acquire knowledge and confidence, thereby improving response quality. Training methodologies should make a practical-experiential approach a priority, so that individuals can master practical skills and personally experience situations with high emotional impact, although in protected training settings.

In addition, all staff should actively take part in periodic exercises and simulations of an air accident. The assistance plan specifies the responsibilities and roles of each staff member involved to rapidly enable them to effectively carry out assistance operations.

Therefore, in addition to the above basic training, it is necessary to implement specific training programmes for each role. Personnel belonging to all entities concerned (CAA, Airport operator, Public Entities, rescue teams) must be trained in transversal programmes that aim to promote the development of basic knowledge and skills for managing collaborative relationships in emergency situations and to understand the risk of stress the staff members are exposed to (the so-called tertiary victims).

These training programmes will facilitate the sharing and exchange of experience, intervention models and current best practices in emergency situations that have the same characteristics regardless of type or place (roads, airports, sea, railways).

Each role involved in the assistance to victims and their families has its own peculiarities in terms of competencies and knowledge and should receive specific training. The entities directly involved are

the CAA, the air carrier, the airport operator, other institutions, ground handlers, non-profit associations and third parties.

Roles are identified as follows:

⇒ Contact Team

⇒ Personnel in charge of the rooms

⇒ Airport Security staff

⇒ Law enforcement personnel

⇒ Third-party staff (volunteers, emergency psychologists, associations of victims' relatives, etc.)

Competencies and skills required for each role and any training activity useful for their acquisition are described hereafter.

Contact Team

The Contact Team has the main function to ensure correct information to victims and their families regarding the emergency management through the CAA's delegate, as well as to provide initial assistance and psychosocial support to survivors and families at the airport through specially trained third-party staff, until the arrival of the involved air carriers' representatives.

Their technical, specialized training should aim to develop the following competencies/skills: communication in emergency situations, observation and active listening, team work in emergency situations, correct transmission of information, stress management, debriefing skills, coordination with airport staff.

Specific knowledge related to the role includes definition and conceptualization of victim, team functioning in emergencies, communication models and tools in emergency, elements of emergency psychology, debriefing procedures.

Training sessions are characterized by active- experiential methodologies such as: watching videos and/or footages of relevant simulations on specific training aspects; participation – both as an actor and observer - in dedicated roleplays, problem solving exercises and the presentation of emergency management cases in various contexts (road accidents, maritime accidents).

Personnel in charge of the rooms

The personnel should gain competencies with regard to communication methods and tools in emergency situations. They have the functions of control and surveillance, transmission and handling of information about operational status of the airport, assistance with appropriate information material (leaflets and forms), coordination with the other roles, hazard reporting. Special focus is required on active/empathetic listening and delivering bad news for the staff members in all

rooms: passenger assistance room, family room, crew member assistance room, crew family receiving room, reunification area (see annex 3).

The capabilities based on the above-mentioned competencies include knowledge related to: security practises and public security, first aid training, communication models/tools in emergency situations, definition and conceptualisation of victim.

Training activities include: classroom lessons, participation in practical exercises – also with regard to the specific guarded room – and roleplays aimed at communication in complex situations with specific focus on the impact of current practises and behaviours in interacting with victims and their families.

Airport Security staff

Airport Security staff are required to develop competencies regarding communication in emergency, provision of support in emergency, team working, listening, observation and monitoring, reporting, danger reporting, coordination with the other roles. The knowledge to be acquired concerns security management, basic procedures for security and fire-fighting inspections, security operations and procedures, multi task management, communication models/tools, as well as how to work in emergency situations considering risk and protection factors.

The training programme includes exercises with the other roles involved in the emergency situation and the use of videos/footage on accidents from the victims' point of view, which are useful to understanding the traumatic impact, the consequences, and good practises of response. Presentations and simulations will enable experiencing the relevant psychological aspects and knowing in depth the risks of secondary victimisation

Law enforcement

Law enforcement personnel have an active role in the emergency management. Besides, the State Police have the difficult task of notifying families of the death of their loved ones. Therefore, it would be appropriate to develop: communication skills in emergency situations, the capability of immediate response, group dynamics management, listening, observation and monitoring, reporting, hazard reporting, coordination with the other roles of support and rescue.

Third parties

Volunteers and third parties are a resource for airports when managing a huge emergency such as an aviation accident. Therefore, it is necessary to involve a considerable number of operators providing the required support to even hundreds of people. They should receive adequate training on: airport scenario, team working, communication in emergency situations, stress management,

listening and observation. They should attend practical training sessions, exercises/drills, and participate in specific roleplaying and watch videos relating to stress management.

EXERCISES AND DRILLS

Exercise and drills are often wrongly used as synonyms, but actually they are two different activities with different purposes. They are as important as the planning and implementation of the training programmes above described.

Exercises and drills should be planned to assess the victim and family assistance programme with a view to continuous improvement, to strengthen teamwork, define roles, and provide the participants with a familiarization level by introducing elements of realism and the pressure of time.

In accordance with ISO 22398 Guidelines, exercises and drills have the following objectives:

- ➢ *orientation/demonstration* – simulate the experience of a situation with the purpose of increasing awareness of vulnerabilities and importance of effective action in response to simulated conditions;

- ➢ *learning* – enhance knowledge, skills and capabilities of individuals or groups with the aim of mastering specific competencies;

- ➢ *collaboration* – give the opportunity to work together for a common goal;

- ➢ *experimentation* – test new methods and/or procedures;

- ➢ *verification* – assess method and/or procedures to evaluate which parts have a sufficient level of maturity.

Preparation of the plan

In the preparation of the exercise and drill plan, it is important to adopt a gradual approach starting from exercising single activities or blocks of activities up to achieving, in a timeframe indicated in the plan, the simultaneous implementation of all elements of the plan in extremely realistic conditions (simulation) also integrated with rescue activities.

The exercise and drill plan, developed by the airport operator within its plan on assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families, should be based on the provisions of International Standard ISO 22398. It would also be important to identify and define the role of "Exercise and Drill Coordinator", responsible for planning, conducting, monitoring the program and assessing these activities.

Exercises

In this document, exercises mean those activities aimed at training specific competencies or procedures through a well-structured short-term and regularly performed activity with specific purposes. Exercises also aim to create automations or highlight any critical issues and areas for

improvement of the system itself. Exercises are carried out without the pressure of time and all participants outlined in the plan should take part in them, according to their respective roles.

In the development of the plan, it is advised to integrate different types of activities, such as:

➔ meetings between the participants identified in the assistance plan for aircraft accident victims and families developed by the airport operator, familiarization with the procedures laid down in it, tasks and roles;

➔ exercises for alerting and activation;

➔ operational exercises aimed at exercising specific aspects of the plan, enhancing skills, implementing procedures including individual or group debriefings in real-time with the perspective of continuous improvement;

➔ exercises aimed at team working;

➔ complex exercises aimed at coordinating various roles and all activities provided for in the plan.

Airport operator's plan should therefore provide a programme of partial exercises aimed at practising:

● activation and coordination of internal and external resources outlined in the plan, with a verification of timelines;

● Set-up and staffing of the rooms and potential contact points (Information counter, ticketing counter etc.) and receiving of the families;

● Registration and management of those involved and management of communication with them;

● Airport Contact Team

  o Activation procedure,

  o Coordination with Operational Centre for Emergency COE;

  o Management of communication with victims and families.

Drills

Once familiarity with the procedures is gained and competencies are improved through the exercise program, a stress test of the system should be performed by using a drill.

By means of drills, longer (at least 6 hours) and as realistic as possible activities are carried out under time pressure. They are aimed at verifying effectiveness of the performed training (both basic and role-specific), evaluating current operational procedures, increasing stakeholders' knowledge of procedures in emergency situations, enabling them to verify ways of interaction with the other stakeholders in case of emergency in order to simplify operations.

As regards the assistance plan to victims, two different types of drills should be considered:

➔ Simultaneous simulation of all activities laid down in the plan;

➔ Simultaneous simulation of all activities laid down in the plan on occasion of the *full-scale simulation* required by the current legislation.

Debrief and continuous improvement

At the end of all sessions, whether they are exercises or drills, a non-evaluative verification of learning should be carried out through a focus group, follow up and/or debriefing activities both immediately afterwards and then again after a period of time.

All participants in the sessions of assistance to victims' families should meet to discuss processes, best practises, areas of improvement and any gaps or deficiencies. This phase verifies:

- The overall response capability of the airport system to emergency
- The technical and specialized response of the involved personnel
- The behavioural and emotional response of the personnel which will also impact in the medium and long term
- The adequacy of the contents of the plan, including the used procedures
- The use of equipment, vehicles, dedicated emergency rooms, specific for each role, in the implementation of the Plan in emergency management.

The outcome of exercises and drills will impact training and exercise programmes without prejudice to the Regulation "Development and management of the plan on assistance to aircraft victims and their families".

ANNEX 1

FOOD FOR THOUGHT FOR DEVELOPING AND MANAGING THE ASSISTANCE PLAN

LOGISTICS

⇒ Have you reflected on how your call centre is organized and how many resources are required to handle a high volume of calls in case of emergency?

⇒ Do you have pre-printed forms that call centre staff can use to collect information? How are completed forms handled (Who should they be sent to)?

⇒ Is it possible to redirect the calls to an external service partner? If so, have you established agreements in advance?

⇒ Have you established agreements with interpreting companies in order to have a timely service when needed? Have you identified who within your organization is responsible for activating this service?

⇒ Have you considered preparing signposts and/or information placards in multiple languages? Have you identified areas of the airport where they may be needed?

⇒ Have you considered providing a continuous cleaning service of the restrooms located near the assistance rooms and establishing it in the contract?

⇒ Have you stipulated agreements in advance with sub concessionaires of catering services? Have you established in advance and set out in the contract which beverages and snacks should be available? Have you informed the selected sub concessionaires about where the rooms are located and have you determined who is responsible for setting them up with beverages and snacks? Have you determined who will be responsible for coordinating this activity within your organization?

⇒ Have you determined who within your organization is responsible for maintaining equipment and supplies in the receiving rooms?

⇒ Have you checked how many electrical sockets are available in the welcome rooms and if they are sufficient?

⇒ Have you considered how to manage parking facilities for the family members?

⇒ Depending on the size of the terminal and location of the rooms, have you evaluated where to store the setup material for the rooms so that it can be quickly accessible?

COMMUNICATION

⇒ Have you developed a social media policy for your employees? Has it been formally shared?

⇒ Have you thought about how to provide assistance to deaf (sign language) and blind (information in braille) persons? Have you determined who within your organization will be responsible for activating this service?

⇒ Have you considered how to communicate privacy rules in the family rooms?

⇒ Is there Wi-Fi in the rooms? Have you prepared any multilingual signs with login information?

⇒ Have you thought about how to manage communication within the terminal (audio/ video messages)? Have you determined who will be responsible for coordinating this activity within your organization?

TRAINING

⇒ Have you established a periodic plan of progressive exercises and drills structured also in individual elements which allows you to test various components of the plan and assess the effectiveness of your choices with a view to continuous improvement?

⇒ Have you planned an annual training for the Contact Team members and any "volunteers"?

⇒ In the training program have you emphasized interpersonal communication aspects and how to manage people in difficult situations?

⇒ Have you trained the call centre staff?

ADMINISTRATION

⇒ Have you considered where to archive the documents, how to document the process and based on which procedure to eliminate them at the end of the emergency? Have you determined who will be responsible for this activity within your organization?

⇒ Have you provided in different languages any forms to be filled in by family members?

⇒ If so, did you have the texts translated by a professional translation agency or native speaking professionals? Have you determined who will be responsible for these documents within your organization?

ANNEX 2

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are to be considered as examples of the relational approach and style to be used.

VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

⇒ Ensure your body language is open and not perceived as a threat.

⇒ Ensure your tone of voice is lower than that of the person you are talking to.

⇒ Avoid industry terminology.

⇒ Give people space and time to express themselves.

⇒ Make physical contact, only if it is appreciated or permitted by religious/cultural customs (hand on the shoulder, hand in hand, hug)

⇒ Put yourself in a "listening" position

⇒ Do not correct people or say that their emotions or moods are wrong

⇒ Do not use acronyms.

⇒ Speak clearly and in a low and reassuring tone of voice

⇒ Remain calm and compassionate

⇒ Be empathetic

⇒ Be ready to calmly repeat information even when the requested information has already been given.

⇒ Be ready to explain who are the competent authorities and parties and their role in the response process.

⇒ Use silence and positive non-verbal expressions, such as nodding, to support the conversation

⇒ Use simple sentences

SENTENCES TO AVOID

⇒ "It was the will of the Lord"

⇒ "Everything happens for a reason"

⇒ "I know/understand how you feel"

⇒ "They are better now"

⇒ "They did not suffer"

⇒ "You are lucky that they survived"

⇒ "You are lucky that they did not survive"

⇒ "They only suffered …. (a fracture, hematoma, burn, etc.)."

STANDARD QUESTIONS

◊ How can I help you?

◊ Are there people at home needing assistance?

◊ Do you need to inform or contact someone?

◊ Do you have children at school or family members or other people who may need assistance? May I contact someone or do you need our help?

◊ Do you take any medicines? Do you need them?

◊ Is there anything else I can do for you?

ANNEX 3

CHECK LIST FOR SETTING UP ASSISTANCE AND RECEIVING ROOMS

Ensure the availability of the following items/services:

◊ chairs, pillows, folding beds and blankets

◊ beverages and snacks

◊ flip-flops, sandals o other one- size-fits all footwear; socks

◊ toiletries (sanitary napkins, toothpaste/toothbrush set);

◊ access to a computer and Wi-Fi, if possible

◊ mobile device chargers

◊ power strips and extension cords

◊ access to phones

◊ access to restroom facilities

◊ security of the room

◊ clipboard

◊ registration forms

◊ pens

◊ notebooks, colouring books, pencils

◊ toys

◊ pet bowls (water and dry food)

◊ ………..