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LOW VISIBILITY PROCEDURES,
AGARTALA AIRPORT, AGARTALA (VEAT)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Until the latest amendment of DGCA Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) section 8, Series ‘C’, Part-I on All-Weather Operations, Low visibility procedures were required at aerodromes for the purpose of ensuring safe operations during Categories II and III approaches and/or low visibility take-offs (LVTO).
- 1.2 However, in latest amendment to CAR (Rev. 10), para 5.3, following provision regarding Low visibility procedures is added. “An operator shall not conduct take-off with RVR/visibility less than standard Category I conditions of 550m RVR/800 m visibility unless low visibility procedures are enforced”.
- 1.3 This provision necessitated the need for low visibility procedures for accommodating/permitting departures in Visibility/RVR less than 800M/550M even at such airports where there are no CAT II and CAT III operations.
- 1.4 As per provisions of Aerodrome Design and Operations CAR and ICAO Annex 14, Runway centre line lights are required for take-off in RVR below 400 M. Further, as per Aerodrome Design and operations CAR para 9.8.7, Surface Movement Radar (SMR)

need to be provided at an aerodrome intended for use in Runway Visual Range conditions less than a value of 350 M.

- 1.5 Accordingly, Low visibility Procedures have been developed for Agartala Airport to accommodate/permit departures in Visibility/RVR less than 800M/550M from RWY 18 (runway served with RVR instruments). and since, there is no RWY centreline lights and SMR facility at Agartala Airport, these procedures will be applicable for take-off in VIS/RVR below 800M/550M but not less than 400 M RVR.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this document is to define the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Low Visibility operation at Agartala Airport.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 This is applicable to all the concerned personnel involved in the Low Visibility Operation as mentioned in this SOP.
- 3.2 The Low Visibility Procedure (LVP) describe the procedures and actions that are required to be taken by the Air Traffic Control (ATC), Pilots, Airline Operators, MET dept, Vehicle Operators, Airport Operations, Electrical Engg., CNS, Airport Fire Services and Ground Handling Agencies during Low Visibility Take-Offs at Agartala Airport.
- 3.3 The procedures contained in this document shall be read in conjunction with other applicable ICAO DOCs and Annexes / DGCA CARs and relevant circulars, AAI CHQ/RHQ instructions on the subject issued from time to time.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 Aerodrome Operating Minima:

The limits of usability of an aerodrome for:

- a) take-off, expressed in terms of runway visual range and/or visibility and, if necessary, cloud conditions.
- b) landing in 2D instrument approach operations, expressed in terms of visibility and/or runway visual range; minimum descent altitude/height (MDA/H) and, if necessary, cloud conditions; and
- c) landing in 3D instrument approach operations, expressed in terms of visibility and/or runway visual range and decision altitude/height (DA/H) appropriate to the type and/or category of the operation.

4.2 **Instrument approach operations (Annex 6):** An approach and landing using instruments for navigation guidance based on an instrument approach procedure. There are two methods for executing instrument approach operations:

- a) a two-dimensional (2D) instrument approach operation, using lateral navigation guidance only; and
- b) a three-dimensional (3D) instrument approach operation, using both lateral and vertical navigation guidance

Note – Lateral and vertical navigation guidance refers to the guidance provided either by:

- a) a ground-based radio navigation aid; or*
- b) computer-generated navigation data from ground-based, space-based, self-contained navigation aids or a combination of these.*

Instrument approach operations shall be classified based on the designed lowest operating minima below which an approach operation shall only be continued with the required visual reference as follows:

- a) Type A: a minimum descent height or decision height at or above 75 m (250 ft); and
- b) Type B: a decision height below 75 m (250 ft). Type B instrument approach operations are categorized as:
 - i) Category I (CAT I): a decision height not lower than 60 m (200 ft) and with either a visibility not less than 800 m or a runway visual range not less than 550 m;
 - ii) Category II (CAT II): a decision height lower than 60 m (200 ft) but not lower than 30 m (100 ft) and a runway visual range not less than 300 m;
 - iii) Category III (CAT III): a decision height lower than 30 m (100 ft) or no decision height and a runway visual range less than 300 m or no runway visual range limitations.

4.3 **Decision Altitude/Height:** A specified altitude or height in a 3D instrument approach operation at which a missed approach must be initiated if the required visual reference to continue the approach has not been established.

Note: Decision altitude (DA) is referenced to mean sea level and decision height (DH) is referenced to the threshold elevation.

4.4 **ILS Critical Area:** An area of defined dimensions about the localizer and glide path antennas where aircraft and vehicles are excluded during all ILS operations. The critical

area is protected because the presence of vehicles / or aircraft inside its boundaries will cause unacceptable disturbance to the ILS signal-in-space.

4.5 ILS Sensitive Area: An area extending beyond the ILS critical area where the parking and/or movement of vehicles, including aircraft, are controlled to prevent the possibility of unacceptable interference to the ILS signal during ILS operations. The sensitive area is protected to provide protection against interferences cause by large moving objects outside the critical area but still normally within the airfield boundary.

4.6 Low Visibility Procedures: Specific procedures applied at an aerodrome for the purpose of ensuring safe operations during Categories II/ III approaches and/or low visibility take-offs.

Note: As per para 5.3 of CAR on All Weather Operations, an operator shall not conduct take-off with RVR/Visibility less than standard CAT-I conditions of 550m RVR/800m Visibility unless low visibility procedures are enforced.

4.7 Low Visibility Take-Off (LVTO): A term used in relation to flight operations referring to a take-off on a Runway where the RVR is less than 400m.

4.8 Manoeuvring Area: That part of an aerodrome to be used for the take-off, landing and taxiing of aircraft, excluding aprons.

4.9 **Movement Area:** That part of an aerodrome to be used for the take-off, landing and taxiing of aircraft, consisting of the manoeuvring area and the apron(s).

4.10 **Visibility (Doc 9365):** Visibility for aeronautical purposes is the greater of:

- a) the greatest distance at which a black object of suitable dimensions, situated near the ground, can be seen and recognized when observed against a bright background;
- b) the greatest distance at which lights in the vicinity of 1000 candelas can be seen and identified against an unlit background.

Note 1: The two distances have different values in air of a given extinction coefficient, and the latter b) varies with the background illumination. The former a) is represented by the meteorological optical range (MOR).

Note 2: The definition applies to the observations of visibility in local routine and special reports, to the observations of prevailing and minimum visibility reported in METAR and SPECI and to the observations of ground visibility.

5. ABBREVIATIONS

5.1 The abbreviations used in descriptions of Low Visibility Procedures have the following meanings:

| | |
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| ARFF: | AIRCRAFT RESCUE & FIRE FIGHTING |
| AGL: | AERONAUTICAL GROUND LIGHT |
| AOM: | AERODROME OPERATING MINIMA |
| ATC: | AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL |
| ATIS: | AUTOMATIC TERMINAL INFORMATION SERVICE |
| CFT: | CRASH FIRE TENDER |
| DG: | DIESEL GENERATING SET |
| GP: | GLIDE PATH |
| ILS: | INSTRUMENT LANDING SYSTEM |
| IHP: | INTERMEDIATE HOLDING POSITION |
| LOC: | LOCALIZER |
| LSA: | LOCALIZER SENSITIVE AREA |
| LVP: | LOW VISIBILITY PROCEDURE |
| MID: | MID POINT |
| MET: | METEOROLOGY |
| NAV: | NAVIGATIONAL |
| RVR: | RUNWAY VISUAL RANGE |
| SMC: | SURFACE MOVEMENT CONTROL |
| SP: | SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES |
| SSO: | SHIFT SUPERVISORY OFFICER |
| TDZ: | TOUCHDOWN ZONE |
| TSO: | TOWER SUPERVISORY OFFICER |
| WSO: | WATCH SUPERVISORY OFFICER |

6. GENERAL

6.1 The Low Visibility Procedure (LVP) incorporates safeguarding measures to mitigate runway incursions and defines operational restrictions to ensure safe Airside Operations considering the available aerodrome facilities.

6.2 The provision mentioned in para 5.3 of DGCA Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) (Rev.-10) section 8, Series 'C', Part-I on All-weather Operations necessitated the need of Low Visibility Procedures for accommodating/ permitting departures in Visibility/RVR less than 800M/550M at Agartala airport even though there are No CAT II and CAT III operations.

6.3 Accordingly, Low visibility Procedures have been developed for Agartala Airport to accommodate/permit departures in Visibility/RVR less than 800M/550M up to 400 M RVR from RWY 18.

7. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

7.1 The following Aeronautical Ground lights and RVR equipment shall be serviceable to the required standard to support Low Visibility Procedures.

- a) Runway edge lights,
- b) Runway end lights,
- c) Runway Guard lights
- d) Road holding position lights
- e) Apron flood lights
- f) Instrumented RVR at the beginning (TDZ RVR).
- g) Stand by Power supply to maintain switch over time of 1 Second for Runway Edge Lights
- h) and Runway End Lights. This requirement can be met with the help of DG Set and/or UPS.

Unserviceability of Aeronautical Ground Lights/ Equipment before Implementation of LVP

Low Visibility Procedures will not be implemented when any of the light/equipment mentioned in para 4 above is un-serviceable or is not maintained as per the required standard.

| Aeronautical Ground Lighting Facility | Un-serviceability | Restrictions |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| Runway Edge lights | More than 15% of all lights are un-serviceable | LVP operations will be suspended. |
| | Any two consecutive lights or more are un-serviceable | |
| Runway End lights | More than 15% of all lights are un-serviceable | LVP operations will be suspended. |
| | Any two consecutive lights or more are un-serviceable | |
| Standby Generators/UPS | Any of the generator/UPS is un-serviceable | LVP operations will be suspended. |

7.2 Unserviceability of Aeronautical Ground Lights / Equipment after Implementation of LVP:

When any of the light/equipment mentioned in para 4.1 above becomes un-serviceable or fails to meet the required standard during periods of LVP, TWR shall advise the aircraft accordingly and LVP shall be suspended and information to this effect shall be included in ATIS broadcast.

8. SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

8.1 Safeguarding Procedures (SP) are instructions for relevant airport departments to prepare ground services and facilities for low visibility operations in order that when LVP are implemented all safeguarding procedures are complete. WSO/Duty Officer Tower will initiate and co-coordinate with all the concerned agencies for completion of safeguarding procedures before implementation of Low Visibility Procedures.

8.2 Safeguarding Procedures shall be initiated when:

- a) The Visibility/RVR is less than 1200m and visibility/RVR is forecast to deteriorate to 800m or less; and/or
- b) The cloud ceiling is less than 400ft and forecast to fall to 200ft or less.

8.3 Whenever meteorological conditions stipulated in para 8.2 prevails or anticipated WSO shall coordinate with Airport Rescue Fire Station (ARFS) for implementing the Safeguarding Procedures (SP). WSO/Duty Officer Tower shall also coordinate with following agencies for initiation of implementation/ cancellation/completion of SP as appropriate.

- a) Airport Operations
- b) Civil & Electrical Engg. /Powerhouse
- c) CNS /Equipment Room
- d) Duty MET Officer
- e) Concerned Airlines
- f) CISF

8.4 When all the concerned agencies have completed their necessary actions, they shall report to WSO/Duty Officer Tower that their Safeguarding Procedure (SP) is completed, and the airport is safeguarded for LVP operations.

8.5 Actions to be taken by Various Agencies:

8.5.1 Before commencement of winter season, a meeting will be held by Airport Director in the month of October every year to inform all airlines and agencies operating at airport

about their roles/ responsibilities and create awareness to ensure cooperation for safe airport operations during periods of low visibility.

8.5.2 All the agencies shall ensure that staff and drivers are suitably trained for Low visibility operations.

8.6 WSO/Duty Officer Tower shall ensure that the provision mentioned in para 8.7 are complied in respect of SP and proper log entry shall be made in respect of initiation of implementation/ cancellation/completion of SP as appropriate.

8.7 **Safeguarding procedures include:**

- a) Positioning of CFTs at the predetermined positions (PDP)
- b) Stopping of all maintenance works on the manoeuvring area as well as removal of all men and mobile equipment from the said area.
- c) Ensuring availability of secondary power supply for change over time of maximum one second for RWY Edge and RWY End lights supported by UPS. *RWY Edge and RWY End lights may continue to operate on main power supply during safeguarding Procedures. Whenever, LVP is to be implemented as per para 9 below, the RWY Edge and RWY End lights shall be put on Standby Power Supply (DG set or UPS). This operation needs to be completed before LVP is implemented.*

As UPS is available at Agartala Airport and is capable of maintaining the required AGL system (refer table under para 7.2) with one second of Switch Over time with Main Supply, the main supply can continue to be primary supply, and the Generator Supply can be kept as Standby Power supply. In case of UPS is unserviceable, Generator supply will become primary source of power supply and Main power supply shall act as standby power supply.

- d) Ensuring that Runways, Taxiways and other associated facilities such as Markings, Aeronautical Ground Lights are inspected within one hour preceding the implementation of LVP Operations. This is done to ensure that the lighting systems and markings are serviceable as described. Inspections should continue every 2 hours while LVP is in progress. These lighting inspections should be accorded priority and, if necessary, aircraft operations may be delayed.
- e) Ensure all access roads are closed by switching on Road Holding position lights and placing temporary barricades at road holding position. Road Holding position lights shall be switched on by electrical jeep and temporary barricades shall be placed by Operation Dept.

9. LOW VISIBILITY PROCEDURES-TAKE OFF

Implementation of Low Visibility Take off Procedures:

- 9.1 MET officer shall inform when Visibility/RVR reduces to 800 Meters or below and/ or cloud ceiling is at 200 ft or below. WSO/Duty officer, ATC Tower shall coordinate with all the agencies to confirm whether the Safeguarding procedures have been completed or not. When Visibility/RVR falls below 800M/550M and or Cloud Ceiling is 200 ft or below and safeguarding procedures are complete WSO/Duty Officer Tower will implement Low Visibility Procedures. WSO/Duty Officer Tower shall inform all users of the imposition of low visibility take off procedures.
- 9.2 A take-off alternate aerodrome shall be selected and specified in the operational flight plan if either the meteorological conditions at the aerodrome of departure are below the operator's established aerodrome landing minima for that operation or if it would not be possible to return to the aerodrome of departure for other reasons.
- 9.3 Take-off minima established by the operator must be expressed as visibility or RVR limits, consideration all relevant factors for each aerodrome planned to be used and the aeroplane characteristics.

10. ACTIONS BY VARIOUS UNITS DURING LVP

10.1 Actions by ATC:

- a) Inform CNS, Aircraft Rescue & Fire Fighting Services, Terminal Manager/Airside operations, Electrical, Civil, MT, CISF etc.
- b) Only one aircraft shall be permitted at a time on the manoeuvring area during the time LVP is in force.
- c) Towing of aircraft during LVP will be permitted only in case of extreme operational requirement. TWR shall ensure that the towing of aircraft is done under escort of "Follow Me" vehicles. "Follow Me" shall follow the route cleared by ATC.
- d) TWR shall not permit any ground run on the manoeuvring area except idle power run on the stands;
- e) TWR shall ensure that "Follow Me" services are provided to pilots on request;
- f) The number of the vehicles on the manoeuvring area shall be restricted to bare minimum and records of all vehicles operating on the manoeuvring area shall be maintained and all vehicles operating on the manoeuvring area shall be in two-way contact with Aerodrome Control Tower.

- g) The following may be included in ATIS. “LOW VISIBILITY PROCEDURES IN FORCE”.
- h) TWR shall permit departures only from the beginning of the Runway in use.
- i) Whenever visibility/RVR is less than 800M/550M, Duty officer tower shall confirm from pilot that the reported RVR value is within minima before issuing take-off clearance.
- j) Duty Officer Tower shall stop all flight operations whenever RVR falls below 400 M.
- k) Runway inspection should be done when interval between two aircraft movements is 30 minutes or more.
- l) Inform changes in RVR readings to the departing aircraft as required.
- m) Inform pilots of all failures of ILS, lighting system etc. relevant to ILS CAT I Low Visibility Operations.
- n) Initiate emergency action if aircraft on CAT I ILS is not in radio contact, as expected.
- o) Duty officer tower shall take the Take – off Alternate from pilot before issuing take-off clearance.

10.2 Actions by CNS In-charge/ Duty Officer, NAV AIDS:

- a) On receipt of “Initiating SP” from ATC, CNS In-charge will inform the Duty Officer, NAV AIDS and have the ILS equipment and its status indicators in ATC units checked up. He will inform ATC of any unserviceability in the equipment which is likely to affect ILS CAT I operation.
- b) On receipt of “Initiating LVP” from ATC that LVP are to be made effective CNS In charge will maintain continuous watch on the performance of ILS equipment and will inform ATC of any un-serviceability which may affect ILS CAT I operation.

10.3 Actions by Duty Manager, Airside operations (To be done by Duty officer ATC TWR):

Duty officer shall ensure that:

- a) No vehicle/person enters or is present in the sensitive/critical areas of localizer and glide path.
- b) All civil/electrical works in progress are to be stopped in the manoeuvring area immediately and men/material/ equipment to be removed from the sensitive/critical areas of localizer and glide path.

- c) Temporary barricades on Road Holding position shall be placed by Operation Dept.

NOTE:

After ensuring above, Follow-me vehicles/operational vehicles will confirm the same to the ATC. Subsequently, follow-me vehicle/ operational vehicles shall remain available and will maintain listening watch on Walkie-Talkie.

Any information about unserviceability of any of the Runway visual aids or power supply system will immediately inform ATC Tower accordingly.

No vehicles shall enter/cross in the vicinity of Runway without permission from ATC Control Tower. Such vehicles shall be able to communicate with ATC.

The vehicles of the ARFF services, civil, electrical division or of any other agency which are not equipped with RT but has to enter the Runway or taxiway for urgent operational requirement shall be escorted by the follow me jeep all the time.

- d) On receipt of advice from ATC to implement Safeguarding procedure, the Terminal Duty Manager, will immediately inform to all airlines.

10.4 Action by Shift Manager (Civil):

- a) Shift Manager (Civil) to ensure that all civil works in progress in manoeuvring area, are stopped and that the work area is restored in complete serviceable condition and confirm to WSO accordingly.
- b) Shift Manager, Civil shall ensure closure of roads leading to critical/sensitive area by chains.
- c) During CAT I operations, ATC may authorize operations of vehicles Specially trained about critical and sensitive area, on manoeuvring area, including the crossing of taxiways.
- d) Ensure that Runways, Taxiways and other associated facilities such as Markings, Lights are inspected every 2 hours while LVP is in progress.

10.5 Action by Shift Manager (Electrical):

- a) On receipt of advice to implement Low Visibility Procedures from ATC, Shift Manager (Electrical) will check that following visual aids are serviceable and can be operated at full intensity:
- i) Approach lighting system
 - ii) Runway edge lights
 - iii) Runway threshold and end lights

***NOTE:** No adjustment in light intensity shall be made without permission from ATC Tower during LVP.*

- b) They shall ensure that no electrical maintenance works is carried out during LVP either in powerhouse or on any other electrical facilities used during CAT I operations.
- c) They will inform the un-serviceability or any change in status of any facility/systems to ATC & Airside Ops Manager immediately.

10.6 Actions by ARFF:

- a) Positioning of crash fire tenders on pre-determined positions.
- b) ARFF/ CFTs must obtain clearances from ATC prior to entry to any aircraft movement area other than the designated service roads.

10.7 Actions by CISF:

- a) The officer in charge on duty shall ensure by deploying adequate manpower that vital electrical installations are properly secured and protected against any unauthorized intrusion.
- b) The Officer in charge, on receipt of advice to implement Low Visibility Procedures, will immediately inform all access gates and CISF posts under their respective controls in operational area to restrict movement of vehicles under their control.

10.8 Actions by Duty Officer (Meteorological Office):

- a) Duty Meteorological Officer would issue an 'Outlook for Low Visibility Procedures' to the ATC whenever he expects that the RVR and/or cloud ceiling will fall below 800 m and/or 400ft or less respectively.
- b) Whenever Duty Meteorological Officer visualizes that RVR is likely to fall below 800 m and/or cloud ceiling to 200ft or less within next 2 hours, he will issue an 'Advisory Message' to ATC to this effect.
- c) When the RVR and/or cloud ceiling are 800m and/or 200ft respectively and the trend is towards improvement in these elements of weather conditions the Duty Met Officer may, when requested by ATC, advise him about such improving weather conditions for the purpose of termination of LVP.
- d) The Duty Met Officer shall be present in Control Tower during periods of reduced visibility and ensure that the RVR displays in the Control Tower is serviceable.

- e) In case, Instrumented RVR is not available, real time RVR shall be provided, whenever requested.

11. TERMINATION OF LOW VISIBILITY TAKE OFF PROCEDURES

11.1 When Visibility/RVR improves to 800M/550 M or more and cloud ceiling is 200 feet or higher and trend is for improvement, WSO/Duty Officer Tower would terminate operations of LVP. He may obtain advice from Duty Met. Officer regarding improvement in weather conditions before the termination of LVP.

- a) The WSO/Duty Officer Tower will intimate the following regarding termination of operations:
 - i) ARFF
 - ii) Terminal Manager/Operations, who will advise all the previously notified personnel to resume normal operations.
 - iii) CNS, Civil, Electrical In-charge
 - iv) M.T Pool
 - v) Duty Met Officer
 - vi) CISF

11.2 On cancelling of LVP, following message shall be included in two subsequent ATIS broadcasts. “LOW VISIBILITY PROCEDURES CANCELLED”.

11.3 If SP are implemented and LVP are not subsequently implemented and the visibility/RVR improves and is more than 1200 m and/or the cloud ceiling is 400ft or higher and both are forecast to remain above the required SP criteria, WSO/Duty Officer Tower may cancel SP.

12. ACTIONS BY OTHER AGENCIES (AIRLINES, REFUELLING COMPANIES, CATERING AGENCIES, ETC.)

12.1 Every year before commencement of monsoon/winter season, a meeting will be held by Airport Director, to inform all airlines and agencies operating at airport about their roles/responsibilities and create awareness to ensure cooperation for safe airport operations during periods of low visibility.

12.2 All the agencies shall ensure that staff and drivers are suitably trained during Low Visibility operations.

12.3 A refresher program for ATCO's and personnel responsible for airside operations should be conducted every year.

- 12.4 All agencies operating in the operational area shall ensure that only those vehicles that are absolutely essential for aircraft operations operate in the operational area during periods of low visibility. The drivers of these vehicles should keep a look out for taxiing aircraft and other vehicles to prevent accidents.
- 12.5 All the vehicles must have their obstruction lights “ON” during Low Visibility Procedures operations.
- 12.6 All instructions/sign boards provided for vehicular movement area/service roads must be followed while operating in the operational area.

AMENDMENTS/CANCELLATIONS:

1. **Insert** the Low Visibility Procedures of this AIP Supplement in VEAT AD 2.20 (local Aerodrome Regulations) of eAIP India.