ECA
European Cockpit Association

LOW VISIBILITY OPERATIONS

It is common practice that airports change to Low Visibility Operations/ Procedures LVO/LVP1 as soon as the weather conditions fall below either CAT I cloud base and/ or visibility requirement.

Some airports, however, are only changing to LVO/LVP when the prevailing visibility drops below 550m, irrespective of actual cloud base or vertical visibility. This is not in line with the ICAO LVO/LVP definition to enable safe Cat II and III operation.

ECA believes that this increases the number of go-arounds when marginal weather conditions are encountered.

LACK OF VISUAL REFERENCE LEADS TO AN INCREASE IN NUMBER OF GO-AROUNDS

At CAT I conditions, a well-defined cloud base with sufficient visibility below may be present, enabling light from the approach and runway lighting system to be seen distinguishably, for a successful landing.

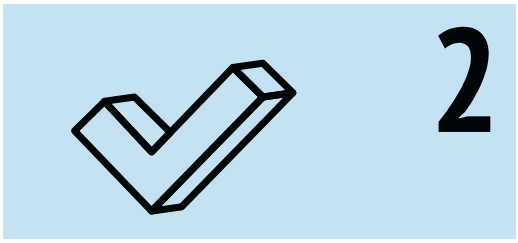
Meteorological conditions at visibilities below CAT I minima are mostly associated with fog and no distinct ceiling. Such phenomena can disseminate the light from the approach and runway lighting system in a way that the view becomes vague and diffuse.

If policies for a change over to LVP do not consider this, the probability for a missed approach increases as crews might not be able to establish visual contact with the required elements at the Decision Altitude.

Crews operating into any airport, where a ceiling/vertical visibility is not considered for the CAT I operations are encouraged to take additional **measures to mitigate any hazards**. This list is intended as a guideline and does not preclude the use of other means, neither is it intended to replace any operator's standard procedures.

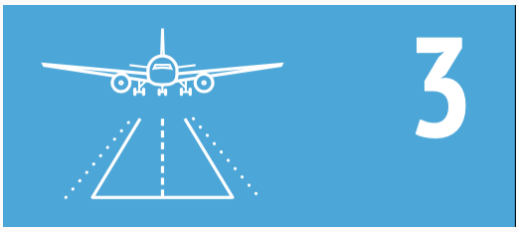
MITIGATING MEASURES FOR CREWS

Consider any ceiling or vertical visibility to properly assess the probability of a successful completion of the approach.

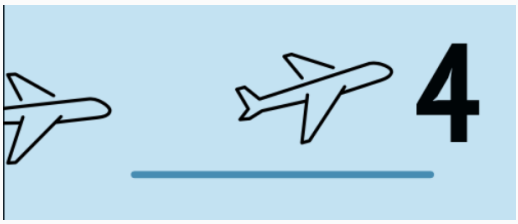


Request a CAT II or CAT III approach from ATC, if this is considered to increase the likelihood of a successful approach.

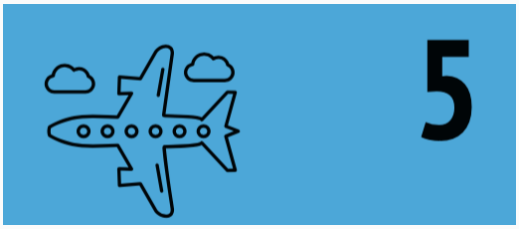
IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE:



Thoroughly brief the expected weather conditions at the decision altitude, as well as the elements of the approach light system or runway that are required to continue below the minimum.



Brief the potential for a go-around in order to reduce the startle effect. This will assist with the proper execution of the procedure, as well as preventing an unintended undershoot of the decision altitude.



Use the capabilities of the auto flight system to decrease workload and facilitate monitoring and assessment of weather conditions at the minimum.

Consider keeping the autopilot engaged to assist with the go-around. Do not continue the approach without the required visual cues.

Always remember that it is within the commander's authority to refuse any given approach.

As a last measure, keep in mind that a diversion to an alternate aerodrome is an option, if the overall risk for an approach is considered excessive.

PREPARING CREW FOR LOW VISIBILITY OPERATIONS

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1

CONSIDER ANY CEILING OR VERTICAL VISIBILITY TO PROPERLY ASSESS THE PROBABILITY OF A SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE APPROACH

2

REQUEST A CAT II OR CAT III APPROACH FROM ATC, IF THIS IS CONSIDERED TO INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF A SUCCESSFUL APPROACH

3

THOROUGHLY BRIEF THE EXPECTED WEATHER CONDITIONS AT THE DECISION ALTITUDE & THE ELEMENTS OF THE APPROACH LIGHT SYSTEM OR RUNWAY THAT ARE REQUIRED TO CONTINUE BELOW THE MINIMUM

4

BRIEF THE POTENTIAL FOR A GO-AROUND IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE STARTLE EFFECT. THIS WILL ASSIST WITH THE PROPER EXECUTION OF THE PROCEDURE, AS WELL AS PREVENTING AN UNINTENDED UNDERSHOOT OF THE DECISION ALTITUDE

5

USE THE CAPABILITIES OF THE AUTO FLIGHT SYSTEM TO DECREASE WORKLOAD, FACILITATE MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF WEATHER CONDITIONS AT THE MINIMUM

6

CONSIDER KEEPING THE AUTOPILOT ENGAGED TO ASSIST WITH THE GO-AROUND. DO NOT CONTINUE THE APPROACH WITHOUT THE REQUIRED VISUAL CUES

7

ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT IT IS WITHIN THE COMMANDER'S AUTHORITY TO REFUSE ANY GIVEN APPROACH