

Aircraft (Investigation of Accidents and Incidents) Rules, 2017

(Published vide G.S.R. 1011(E) dated 7th August 2017)

1. Short title, extent and commencement -- (1) These rules may be called the Aircraft (Investigation of Accidents and Incidents) Rules, 2017.

(2) These rules extend to the whole of India and apply —

- (a) to citizens of India wherever they may be;
- (b) to, and to the persons on, aircraft registered in India wherever they may be;
- (c) to, and to the persons on, aircraft registered outside India but for the time being in or over India; and
- (d) to an aircraft operated by a person who is not a citizen of India but has his principal place of business or permanent residence in India.

(3) They shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

2. Definitions. — In these rules, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context, --

(1) **“accident”** means an occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft which, --

- (i) in the case of a manned aircraft, takes place between the time any person boards the aircraft with the intention of flight until such time as all such persons have disembarked; or
- (ii) in the case of an unmanned aircraft, takes place between the time the aircraft is ready to move with the purpose of flight until such time as it comes to rest at the end of the flight and the primary propulsion system is shut down, in which--

(a) a person is fatally or seriously injured as a result of -

- (i) being in the aircraft; or
- (ii) direct contact with any part of the aircraft, including parts which have become detached from the aircraft; or
- (iii) direct exposure to jet blast,

Except when the injuries are from natural causes, self-inflicted or inflicted by other persons, or when the injuries are to stowaways hiding outside the areas normally available to the passengers and crew; or

(b) the aircraft sustains damage or structural failure which -

- (i) adversely affects the structural strength, performance or flight characteristics of the aircraft; and
- (ii) would normally require major repair or replacement of the affected component, except for engine failure or damage, when the damage is limited to a single engine, (including its cowlings or accessories), to propellers, wingtips, antennas, probes, vanes, tires, brakes, wheels, fairings, panels, landing gear doors, wind screens, the aircraft skin (such as small dents or puncture holes), or for minor damages to main rotor blades, tail rotor blades, landing gear, and those resulting from hail or bird strike (including holes in the radome); or

(c) the aircraft is missing or is completely inaccessible.

Note1.—For the purposes of this clause, the guidance for the determination of aircraft damage is at Schedule B.

Note2.—For the purposes of this clause, only unmanned aircraft which have design or operational approval given by a State to be considered.

^b*[Note3. — An aircraft shall be considered as missing when the official search has been terminated and the wreckage has not been located.]*

- (2) **“accident investigation authority”** means the authority designated by a State as responsible for aircraft accident and incident investigations within the context of ICAO Annex 13;
- (3) **“accredited representative”** means a person designated by a State, on the basis of his or her qualifications, for the purpose of participating in an investigation conducted by another State, and the accredited representative would normally be from the state’s accident investigation authority;
- (4) **“Act”** means the Aircraft Act, 1934 (22 of 1934);
- (5) **“adviser”** means a person appointed by a State, on the basis of his or her qualifications, for the purpose of assisting its accredited representative in an investigation;
- (6) **“aircraft”** means any machine that can derive support in the atmosphere from the reactions of the air other than the reactions of the air against the surface of the earth;
- (7) **“Annex 13”** means Annex 13 to the Convention relating to International Civil Aviation signed at Chicago on the 7th day of December, 1944 as amended from time to time;
- (8) **“Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB)”** means the accident investigation authority established by the Central Government as per Annex 13 of ICAO;
- (9) **“causes”** means actions, omissions, events, conditions, or a combination thereof, which led to the accident or incident but does not amount to assigning fault or determination of administrative, civil or criminal liability;
- (10) **“Chicago Convention”** means the Convention relating to International Civil Aviation signed at Chicago on the 7th day of December, 1944 as amended from time to time;
- (11) **“contributing factors”** mean actions, omissions, events, conditions, or a combination thereof, which if eliminated, avoided or absent, would have reduced the probability of the accident or incident occurring, or mitigated the severity of the consequences of the accident or incident and the identification of the contributing factors does not imply the assignment of fault or determination of administrative, civil or criminal liability’;
- (12) **“DG, CA”** means the Director General who shall be the head of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. Directorate General of Civil Aviation means the organisation performing civil aviation regulatory and safety oversight functions;
- (13) **“DG, AAIB”** means the Director General who shall be the head of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau;
- (14) **“fatal injury”** means an injury which is sustained by a person in an accident and which results in his or her death within thirty days of the date of the accident;
- (15) **“Draft Final Report”** means the report submitted by the Investigators appointed under rule 11 or rule 12, for forwarding to the States for consultation under sub-rule (1) of rule 14;
- (16) **“flight recorder”** means any type of recorder installed in the aircraft for the purpose of complementing accident or incident investigation;
- (17) **“ICAO”** means the International Civil Aviation Organisation created under the Convention relating to International Civil Aviation signed at Chicago on the 7th day of December, 1944;
- (18) **“incident”** means an occurrence, other than an accident, associated with the operation of an aircraft which affects or could affect the safety of operation;
- (19) **“investigation”** means a process conducted for the purpose of prevention of accident which includes the gathering and analysis of information, the drawing of conclusions, including the determination of causes, contributing factors and, when appropriate, the making of safety recommendations;

(20) **“Investigator”** means a person appointed by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau to investigate an accident or a serious incident as Investigator-in-Charge under rule 11, or by the Central Government for Formal Investigation under rule 12, or authorised by Bureau to conduct preliminary investigation under sub-rule (1) of rule 9 or sub-rule (2) of rule 7; or an Investigator-in-Charge appointed by DG, CA under rule 13;

(21) **“Investigator-in-Charge”** means a person charged, on the basis of his or her qualifications, with the responsibility for the organisation, conduct and control of an investigation;

Note: Nothing in this clause shall preclude the functions of an Investigator- in-Charge being assigned to the Court referred to in rule 12 or other body.

(22) **“maximum mass”** means maximum certificated take-off mass;

(23) **“missing aircraft”** means when the official search has been terminated and the wreckage of the aircraft has not been located;

(24) **“occurrence”** means any safety-related event which endangers or which, if not corrected or addressed, could endanger an aircraft, its occupants or any other persons and it includes incident, serious incident and accident;

(25) **“operator”** means a person, organisation or enterprise engaged in or offering to engage in an aircraft operation;

(26) **“preliminary report”** means the communication used for the prompt dissemination of data obtained during the early stages of the investigation;

(27) **“safety recommendation”** means -

- (i) a proposal of an accident investigation authority based on information derived from an investigation, made with the intention of preventing accidents or incidents and which in no case has the purpose of creating a presumption of blame or liability for an accident or incident;
- (ii) recommendations resulting from diverse sources and safety studies;

(27A) ^b[**“Safety recommendation of global concern (SRGC)”** means a safety recommendation regarding a systemic deficiency having a probability of recurrence, with significant consequences at a global level, and requiring timely action to improve safety;]

(28) **“Schedule”** means a Schedule to these rules;

(29) **“serious incident”** means an incident involving circumstances indicating that there was a high probability of an accident and associated with the operation of an aircraft which, --

- (i) in the case of a manned aircraft, takes place between the time any person boards the aircraft with the intention of flight until such time as all such persons have disembarked; or
- (ii) in the case of an unmanned aircraft, takes place between the time the aircraft is ready to move with the purpose of flight until such time as it comes to rest at the end of the flight and the primary propulsion system is shut down;

Note.— The examples of serious incident are as specified in Schedule A.

(30) **“serious injury”** means an injury which is sustained by a person in an ^b[occurrence] and which -

- (i) requires hospitalisation for more than forty-eight hours, commencing within seven days from the date the injury was received; or
- (ii) results in a fracture of any bone (except simple fractures of fingers, toes or nose); or
- (iii) involves lacerations which cause severe hemorrhage, nerve, muscle or tendon damage; or
- (iv) involves injury to any internal organ; or
- (v) involves second or third degree burns, or any burns affecting more than five per cent; or
- (vi) involves verified exposure to infectious substances or injurious radiation;

- (31) **“State of Design”** means the State having jurisdiction over the organisation responsible for the type design of the aircraft;
- (32) **“State of Manufacture”** means the State having jurisdiction over the organisation responsible for the final assembly of the aircraft;
- (33) **“State of Occurrence”** means the State in the territory of which an accident or incident occurs;
- (34) **“State of the Operator”** means the State in which the principal place of business of the operator is located or, if there is no such place of business, the permanent residence of the operator;
- (35) **“State of Registry”** means the State on whose register the aircraft is entered.

Explanation.—In the case of the registration of aircraft of an international operating agency other than on a national basis, the States constituting the agency shall jointly and severally discharge the obligations which attach to a State of Registry under Annex13;

- (36) **“State Safety Programme”** means an integrated set of regulations and activities aimed at improving safety.
- (37) ^b[**“UTC”** means Universal Time Co-ordinated.]

3. Objective of investigation of accidents and incidents. — (1) The sole objective of the investigation of an accident or incident shall be the prevention of accidents and incidents and not to apportion blame or liability.

(2) Any investigation conducted in accordance with the provisions of these rules shall be separate from any judicial or administrative proceedings to apportion blame or liability.

4. Notification. — (1) Where an accident or incident occurs to an aircraft covered under sub-rule (2) of rule 1, then the pilot-in-command of the aircraft or, if he be killed or incapacitated, the owner, the operator, the hirer or other person on whose behalf he was in command of the aircraft, or any relevant person, as the case may be, shall, as soon as is reasonably practicable but in any case not later than twenty-four hours after he becomes aware of the accident or the incident—

- (a) send notice thereof to Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau and Directorate General of Civil Aviation by the quickest means of communication available; and
- (b) in the case of an accident or incident occurring in India, give information to the District Magistrate and the Officer-in-charge of the nearest Police Station of the accident or incident and of the place where it occurred.

(2) The notification shall be in plain language and contain as much of the following information as is readily available, namely: -

- (a) for accidents the identifying abbreviation ACCID, for incidents INCID, ^b[for serious incidents SINCID];
- (b) manufacturer, model, nationality and registration marks, and serial number of the aircraft;
- (c) name of owner, operator and hirer, if any, of the aircraft;
- (d) qualification of the pilot-in-command, and nationality of crew and passengers;
- (e) date and time ^b[(local time or UTC)] of the accident or incident;
- (f) last point of departure and point of intended landing of the aircraft;
- (g) position of the aircraft with reference to some easily defined geographical point and latitude and longitude;
- (h) number of crew and passengers; aboard, killed and seriously injured; others, killed and seriously injured;
- (i) description of the accident or incident and the extent of damage to the aircraft so far as is known;
- (j) physical characteristics of the accident or incident area, as well as an indication of access difficulties or special requirements to reach the site; and
- (k) presence and description of dangerous goods on board the aircraft, but notification shall not be delayed due to the lack of complete information.

(3) If the details or, other known relevant information referred in sub-rule (2) are omitted, such information shall also be dispatched as soon as it is possible.

- (4) The notification as required in sub-rule (2) shall also be submitted to the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau by—
- (a) Aerodrome operator;
 - (b) Air Traffic services in-charge concerned;
 - (c) DG, CA, wherever applicable.
- (5) The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau shall notify the facts of the accident or serious incident in The Indian territory or in the assigned oceanic airspace beyond the territory of India, containing as much of the information referred to in sub-rule (2) as may be available with a minimum of delay and by the most suitable and quickest means available, to —
- (a) the State of Registry;
 - (b) the State of Operator;
 - (c) the State of Design;
 - (d) the State of Manufacture; and
 - (e) ICAO when the aircraft involved is of a maximum mass of over 2,250 kg or is a turbojet powered aeroplane.
- (6) The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau while notifying information in accordance with sub-rule (5) shall also add the following information, namely: -
- (a) an indication to what extent the investigation will be conducted by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau or is proposed to be delegated by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau to another State; and
 - (b) identification of the originating authority and means to contact the Investigator-in-Charge or Court referred to in rule 12, as the case may be.
- (7) If the State of Occurrence is not aware of a serious incident or accident to an Indian registered aircraft or an aircraft operated by Indian operator, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau shall forward a notification of such a serious incident or accident to the State of Design, the State of Manufacturer and the State of Occurrence.
- 5. Obligation to investigate.** — (1) In case of an accident or incident to an aircraft in the territory of India, notwithstanding its registration, --
- (a) the DG, AAIB shall institute an investigation into the circumstances of the accident ^a, and shall be responsible for conducting the investigation;
 - (b) the DG, AAIB shall institute an investigation into the circumstances of the serious incident when the aircraft involved is of maximum mass of over 2250 Kg. or is a turbojet airplane;
 - (c) the DG, CA shall institute an investigation into the circumstances of all incidents and serious incidents to aircraft not covered by clause (b);
 - (d) the Central Government may institute a formal investigation into circumstances of any ^b[occurrence] to an Indian registered aircraft if it appears that it is expedient to hold such investigation.
- (2) Notwithstanding anything contained in clause (c) of sub-rule (1), where it appears to the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau that it is expedient to hold an investigation into circumstances of any serious incident covered under said clause (c), it may, by order, institute an investigation into circumstances of a serious incident to any aircraft.
- (3) Classification by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau of an occurrence as accident or serious incident or incident shall be final and binding.
- (4) In case an accident or a serious incident to an Indian registered aircraft occurs at a location not being a territory of any State, then the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau shall institute an investigation into the circumstances of the accident or serious incident and shall be responsible for conducting the investigation.
- (5) In case India is the nearest State to the scene of an accident in international waters to an aircraft not registered in India or not operated by an Indian operator, then the Aircraft Accident Investigation

Bureau shall advise the State of Registry to institute an investigation and the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau in such a case shall provide assistance to the extent it is able to and shall, likewise, respond to requests by the State of Registry.

6. Participation. — (1) In case the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau has instituted an investigation of an accident or a serious incident in accordance with rule 5, then the accredited representatives, who are appointed by the following States, namely: —

- (a) the State of Registry;
- (b) the State of the Operator;
- (c) the State of Design; and
- (d) the State of Manufacture;

shall be permitted to participate in the investigation

(2) The States referred to in sub-rule (1) shall also be entitled to appoint one or more advisers to assist their accredited representatives.

(3) The States referred to in sub-rule (1) shall have the rights and entitlements in accordance with the standards stipulated under Annex 13.

(4) A State which has a special interest in an accident by virtue of fatalities or serious injuries to its citizens shall be entitled to appoint an expert who shall have rights and entitlements in accordance with standards stipulated under Annex 13.

(5) Any State which on request provides information, facilities or experts to Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau shall also be entitled to appoint an accredited representative to participate in the investigation who shall have the rights and entitlements in accordance with the standards stipulated under Annex 13.

(6) The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau on receipt of a notification of an accident or a serious incident to an Indian registered aircraft in the territory of another State, may appoint accredited representative and advisors to participate in the investigation and intimate it to the State of Occurrence.

7. Protection of evidence, custody, removal and preservation of damaged aircraft. — (1) In the case of an accident or a serious incident, which is required to be notified under rule 4, the Investigator-in-Charge shall have unhampered access to the wreckage and all relevant material and information, including flight recorders and Air Traffic Services records, and shall have unrestricted control over it to ensure that a detailed examination can be made without delay by authorised personnel participating in the investigation.

(2) The aircraft and contents thereof shall not, except by a person under the authority of the DG, AAIB, be removed or otherwise interfered with:

Provided that-

- (a) the aircraft or any parts or contents thereof may be removed or interfered with so far as may be necessary by persons authorized to conduct search and rescue operations for the purpose of extricating persons or animals dead or alive, or preventing the destruction of the aircraft and its contents by fire or other cause, or preventing any damage or obstruction to the public or to air navigation or to other transport;
- (b) if the aircraft is wrecked on water, the aircraft or any parts or contents thereof may be removed to such extent as may be necessary for bringing it or them to a place of safety by persons authorised to conduct search and rescue operations;
- (c) goods may be removed from the aircraft under the supervision and with the concurrence of an officer of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau or a person authorised by the DG, AAIB;
- (d) personal luggage of passengers and crew after photography, weighing, etc. may be removed from the aircraft under the supervision of a Police Officer, a Magistrate, an Officer of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau or a person authorised by DG, AAIB; and
- (e) mails photography, weighing etc. may be removed under the supervision of a Police Officer, a Magistrate, an Officer of the Department of Posts and Telegraphs or an Officer of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau or a person authorised by DG, AAIB.

- (3) The DG, AAIB may, for the purposes of any investigation including preliminary investigation under these rules ^b[issue directions], authorise any person or persons to take measures –
- (a) to protect the evidence and shall include the preservation, by photographic or other means, of any evidence which might be removed, effaced, lost or destroyed;
 - (b) to maintain safe custody of the aircraft and its contents and shall include protection against further damage, access by unauthorised persons, pilfering and deterioration;
 - (c) for preservation of the aircraft for such a period as may be necessary for the purposes of an investigation.
 - (d) ^b[for arranging a suitable place and facilitation of transportation of wreckage to such a place.]

- (4) The owner of the aircraft or his nominated representative shall have the right to be present during any examination or other action taken under sub-rules (1), (2) and (3):

Provided that the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau shall not be bound to postpone any action which it may consider necessary under this rule by reason of the absence of the owner or his representative.

- (5) If a request is received from the State of Registry, the State of the Operator, the State of Design or the State of Manufacture that the aircraft, its contents, and any other evidence remain undisturbed pending inspection by an accredited representative of the requesting State, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau shall take all necessary steps to comply with such request, so far as this is reasonably practicable and compatible with the proper conduct of the investigation subject to the provisions of sub-rules (1) and (2).

- (6) Subject to the provisions of sub-rules (1), (2) and (3), the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau shall release custody of the aircraft, its contents or any parts thereof as soon as they are no longer required for investigation, to owner or operator or his representative, or any person or persons duly designated by the State of Registry or the State of the Operator, in case of foreign registered aircraft.

- (7) For the purpose of sub-rule (6), the Central Government shall facilitate access to the aircraft, its contents or any parts thereof:

Provided that, if the aircraft, its contents, or any parts thereof lie in an area within which the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau finds it impracticable to grant such access, the Central Government shall effect removal to a point where access can be given.

- (8) The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau shall be the sole agency regarding the custody of the evidence collected during the investigation including the wreckage and recorders, and in case of requirement of access to such evidence by any other agency, DG, AAIB after being satisfied for requirement of such access may facilitate such access while retaining the custody thereof.

8. Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau.—(1) For the purposes of carrying out investigation into accidents, serious incidents and incidents referred to in sub- rules (1), (2) and (4) of rule 5, the Central Government shall set up a Bureau in the Ministry of Civil Aviation known as the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau of India and appoint such number of officers in the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau who are familiar with civil aircraft accident investigation procedures and other persons, as it deems fit from time to time.

- (2) The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau shall be an attached office to Government of India, Ministry of Civil Aviation and the DG, AAIB shall report to Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation.

- (3) The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau shall discharge the following functions, namely: -

(a) obtaining preliminary report under rule 9 from any person or persons authorised either under sub-rule (1) of rule 9 or under sub-rule (3) of rule 7;

(b) classification of occurrence and setting up investigation and in case of formal investigation, assisting the Central Government, under these rules;

(c) to facilitate the investigation and administrative work of the investigation whenever necessary;

- (d) processing of the reports of investigation received by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau, which includes –
 - (i) acceptance of report by DG, AAIB and making it public by DG, AAIB in a manner it deems fit;
 - (ii) forwarding of the final report, made public by the Central Government under sub-rule (2) of rule 14 or by Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau, to the States as required under Annex 13;
 - (iii) forwarding of the final report, made public by the Central Government or Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau, to ICAO if the mass of the aircraft involved in accident or incident is more than 5,700 kg.
 - (e) to formulate safety recommendation on the basis of safety studies, including induction of new technology to enhance safety, conducted from time to time;
 - (f) to establish and maintain an accident and serious incident database for effective analysis of information on actual or potential safety deficiencies;
 - (g) to process obligations of the Central Government under Annex 13 to the Convention relating to International Civil Aviation signed at Chicago on the 7th day of December, 1944 as amended from time to time;
 - (h) to forward the recommendations made in investigation reports and safety studies to DG, CA and other regulatory authorities for their follow up and to obtain compliance of the same;
 - (ha) ^b[to inform ICAO of the issuance of a Safety Recommendation of Global Concern (SRGC) and its responses in dated transmittal correspondence, even when the SRGC is not addressed to ICAO; and]
 - (i) any other functions, which the Central Government may ask the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau to perform from time to time under these rules.
- (4) The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau may, make procedures, not inconsistent with the provisions of the Act and the rules made thereunder to carry out the purposes of these rules and the functions referred to in sub-rule (3).
- (5) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such procedures may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely: —
- (a) the persons required to notify the accidents and incidents;
 - (b) the notifications of accidents and serious incidents to International Civil Aviation Organisation and the States for participation in the investigation;
 - (c) the investigation of aircraft accidents and incidents;
 - (d) the format of report for investigation conducted under these rules;
 - (e) any other matter subsidiary or incidental to aircraft accident and incident investigation.
- 9. Preliminary investigation.** — (1) The DG, AAIB may authorise any person including an officer of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau to conduct a preliminary investigation into an accident or incident and to submit a preliminary report to the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau in a specified format to assess the classification of the occurrence and the expertise needed for detailed investigation under rule 11, if considered expedient by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau.
- (2) The person authorized to conduct the preliminary investigation shall —
- (a) have the powers and duties specified under rule 10; and
 - (b) have the access to examine or otherwise deal with the aircraft as provided under sub-rule (3) of rule 7.
- 10. Powers and duties of Investigator.** — (1) For the purposes of investigation of accidents and incidents an Investigator shall have power—
- (a) ^c[to call and examine any witness relevant to the investigation, and to require such witness to furnish or produce information or evidence or to answer or returns to any inquiries he thinks fit to make;]

- (b) to require any such ^e[witness] to make and to sign a declaration regarding the true nature of the statements made by him;
 - (c) to require and enforce the production of all books, paper, documents and any articles including but not limited to Flight Data Recorder, Cockpit Voice Recorder and Air Traffic Services Records which he may consider necessary for the investigation, and to retain any such books, papers, documents and any articles including but not limited to Flight Data Recorder, Cockpit Voice Recorder and Air Traffic Services Records for examination until completion of the investigation;
 - (d) to have access to and examine any aircraft and its components involved in the accident or incident, the place where the accident or incident occurred or any other place, the entry upon and examination of which appears to the Investigator necessary for the purpose of the investigation.
- (2) The Investigator shall be responsible for fair, impartial and judicious conduct of investigation based on relevant standard of Annex 13.

11. Investigation by Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau. -- (1) The DG, AAIB may appoint an Investigator-in-Charge and one or more Investigators to assist him, to hold an investigation into an aircraft accident or a serious incident and such Investigator-in-Charge and Investigators shall have the same powers and duties as an Investigator has under rule 10.

- (2) The investigation shall be held in private.
- (3) When a person other than an officer of the Government is appointed as Investigator by the DG, AAIB, he may be granted such fee and expenses as may be determined by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau.
- (4) Every person summoned by the Investigator-in-Charge as a witness in accordance with these rules shall be allowed such expenses as the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau may from time to time determine.
- (5) The Investigator-in-Charge shall submit a Final Report to the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau in the format specified by the said Bureau based on relevant standards of Annex 13.
- (6) ^b[The DG, AAIB shall accept the report of the Investigator-in-Charge and after acceptance, the same shall be made public by the DG, AAIB in a manner he deems fit.]

12. Formal investigation. — Where it appears to the Central Government that it is expedient to hold a formal investigation of an accident, it may, whether or not an investigation has been made under rule 11, by order, direct a formal investigation to be held and with respect to any such formal investigation, the following provisions shall apply, namely: -

- (a) the Central Government shall appoint a competent person (herein after referred to as "the Court"), to hold the investigation, and may appoint one or more persons possessing legal, aeronautical, engineering, or other special knowledge to act as assessors, and one or more Investigators shall be appointed from Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau as an assessor;
- (b) when a person other than an officer of the Government is appointed as a Court or assessor, he may be granted such fee and expenses as may be determined by the Central Government;
- (c) on or after the appointment of the Court, all other investigations ordered under these rules shall be treated as closed and all relevant material on the subject shall be transferred to the Court;
- (d) the Court shall hold the investigation in open court in such manner and under such conditions as the Court may think fit for ascertaining the causes and circumstances of the accident and for enabling it to make the report herein after mentioned:

Provided that where the Court is of opinion that holding the investigation is likely --

- (i) to be prejudicial to the interests of any country; or

- (ii) to jeopardize the personal safety of a person who is willing to make any statement or give evidence, the Court may, hold the proceedings in camera, the whole or part of the investigation;
- (e) the Court shall have, for the purpose of the investigation, all the powers of a Civil Court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (5 of 1908) and without prejudice to these powers the Court may -
 - (i) enter and inspect, or authorize any person to enter and inspect, any place or building, the entry or inspection whereof appears to the Court requisite for the purposes of the investigation; and
 - (ii) enforce the attendance of witnesses and compel the production of documents and material objects; and every person required by the Court to furnish any information shall be deemed to be legally bound to do so within the meaning of section 176 of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860);
- (f) the assessors shall have the same powers of entry and inspection as the Court;
- (g) every person attending as a witness before the Court shall be allowed such expenses as the Court may consider reasonable:

Provided that, in the case of the owner or hirer of any aircraft concerned in the accident and of any person in his employment or of any other person concerned in the accident, any such expenses may be disallowed if the Court, in its discretion, so directs for reasons to be recorded in writing;

- (h) the Court after holding consultation on Draft Final Report with the States as required in Annex 13, shall submit the Final Report to the Central Government in the format specified by Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau and such report shall be forwarded to the said Bureau by the Central Government for processing as per sub-rule (3) of rule 8 and rule 14;
- (i) the assessors shall either sign the said report, with or without reservations, or state in writing their dissent there from and their reasons for such dissent, and such reservations or dissent and reasons, if any, shall be forwarded to the Central Government with the report.

13. Investigation of incident. - (1) The DG, CA may order an investigation of any incident or a serious incident involving an aircraft covered under clause (c) sub-rule (1) of rule 5, and may appoint a competent and qualified person as Investigator-in-Charge for the purpose of carrying out the investigation.

- (2) In case the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau decides to investigate the incident or serious incident under sub-rule (2) of rule 5, the investigation ordered by DG, CA under sub-rule (1) shall be closed and all relevant material shall be transferred to the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau for its investigation.
- (3) The investigation referred to in sub-rule (1) shall be held in private.
- (4) The Investigator-in-Charge shall have the same powers and duties as an investigator under rule 10.
- (5) The Investigator-in-Charge shall make report to the DG, CA in the format specified by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau based on relevant standards of Annex 13.
- (6) The DG, CA shall accept the report of the Investigator-in-Charge and after acceptance, the same shall be made public by the DG, CA in a manner he deems fit.

14. Consultation and Final Report.-(1) The Investigator-in-Charge or the Court shall forward a copy of the Draft Final Report under sub-rule (5) of rule 11 or under clause (h) of rule 12 to--

- (a) the State of registry;
- (b) the State of operator;
- (c) the State of design;

- (d) the State of manufacturer, and
 - (e) the State that participated in the investigation in accordance with sub-rule(4) of rule 6, inviting their significant and substantiated comments on the report within sixty days of its issuance.
- (2) The Court appointed under rule 12 or the Investigator-in-Charge may amend the draft Final Report either by inclusion of the substance of the comments received within sixty days of the issuance of the report or by appending the comments thereto if so desired by the State and cause any such Final Report and reservation or dissent and reasons, if any, to be made public, in such manner as deemed fit based on relevant standards of Annex 13.
- (3) The Final Report made public, by the Central Government or the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau, shall be forwarded to the States entitled to receive such report under Annex 13 and the report shall also be forwarded to ICAO, if the mass of the aircraft involved in the accident or incident is more than 5,700 kg.
- 15. Reopening of investigation.** – Where it appears to the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau or the Central Government that any new and significant material evidence has become available after completion of the investigation under rule 11 or rule 12, as the case may be, it may, by order, direct the reopening of the same.
- 16. Obstruction of proceedings.** – (1) No person shall obstruct or impede the Court, Assessors Investigator or any other person acting in the exercise of any powers or duties under these rules.
- (2) No person shall without reasonable excuse fail to comply with any summons or requisition of a Court or an Investigator- in-Charge or an Investigator or any other person holding an investigation or an inquiry under these rules.
- Explanation. - For the purposes of this rule, when a question arises as to whether a person has a reasonable excuse, the burden of proving that he has a reasonable excuse shall be upon him.*
- (3) Any person, who obstructs or impedes the proceedings, shall be punishable in accordance with the provisions of sub-section (2) of section 10 of the Act.
- 17. Non-disclosure of records.** — (1) The following records shall not be disclosed for purposes other than the investigation of the accident or incident except when the Central Government determines that their disclosure outweighs the adverse domestic and international impact such action may have on that investigation or any future investigations:-
- (a) all statements taken from persons by the investigation authorities in the course of their investigation;
 - (b) all communications between persons having been involved in the operation of the aircraft;
 - (c) medical or private information regarding persons involved in the accident or incident;
 - (d) cockpit voice recordings and transcripts from such recordings;
 - (e) recordings and transcriptions of recordings from air traffic control units;
 - (f) cockpit airborne image recordings and any part or transcripts from such recordings;
 - (g) opinion expressed in the analysis of information, including flight recorder information.
- (2) A record referred to in sub-rule (1) shall be included in a Final Report or its appendices, or in any other report only when it is relevant to the analysis of the accident or incident and parts of the records not relevant to the analysis shall not be included in the Final Report.
- (3) The Final Report shall not disclose the names of the persons involved in the accident or incident.
- (4) Any request for records in the custody or control of Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau shall not be entertained if not routed through the original source, where available.
- (5) The audio content of cockpit voice recordings as well as image and audio content of airborne image recordings shall not be disclosed to the public.
- (6) The content of Draft Final report received from other States shall not be disclosed to public.

18. ^c[Omitted]
19. ^c[Omitted]
20. **Maintenance of accident and incident database.** — The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau shall establish and maintain an accident and serious incident database and provide the same for inclusion in safety data being maintained by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation shall exchange their database with Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau on regular basis.
21. **Saving.** —Nothing in these rules shall limit or otherwise affect the power of the Central Government with regard to the cancellation, suspension or endorsement of any licence or certificate issued under the Aircraft Rules, 1937.
22. **Penalties.** – Any person who contravenes, or fails to comply with, any of these rules, shall be punishable in accordance with the provisions of the sub-section (2) of section 10 of the Act.
23. ^a[Omitted]
24. ^b[**AAIB Bulletins.** – (1) The DG, AAIB may, through publication entitled AAIB Bulletins, issue information not inconsistent with the Aircraft Act, 1934 (22 of 1934) and these rules, relating to the investigation of accidents and serious incidents of aircraft flying in or over India or of aircraft registered in India.]

Schedule A

[See rule 2 (29)]

SERIOUS INCIDENTS

The incidents listed are typical examples of incidents that are likely to be serious incidents and the list is not exhaustive and only serves as guidance to the definition of serious incident.

- (a) Near collisions requiring an avoidance maneuver to avoid a collision or an unsafe situation or when an avoidance action would have been appropriate.

^b[Note: Near collision classified with severity —Risk of Collision\ and —Safety not assured as in ICAO Doc 4444 shall be classified as serious incident.]

- (b) Collisions not classified as accidents.
- (c) Controlled flight into terrain only marginally avoided.
- (d) Aborted take-offs on a closed or engaged runway, on a taxiway (excluding authorised operations by helicopters) or unassigned runway.
- (e) Take-offs from a closed or engaged runway, from a taxiway (excluding authorised operations by helicopters) or unassigned runway.
- (f) Landings or attempted landings on a closed or engaged runway, on a ^b[taxiway, unassigned runway or unintended landing locations such as roadways].
- (g) Gross failures to achieve predicted performance during take-off or initial climb.
- (h) Fires or smoke in the cockpit, in the passenger compartment, in cargo compartments or engine fires, even though such fires were extinguished by the use of extinguishing agents.
- (i) Events requiring the emergency use of oxygen by the flight crew.
- (j) Aircraft structural failures or engine disintegrations, including uncontained turbine engine failures, not classified as an accident.
- (k) Multiple malfunctions of one or more aircraft systems seriously affecting the operation of the aircraft.
- (l) ^b[Flight crew incapacitation in flight;
 - (i) for single pilot operations including remote pilot;
 - (ii) for multi-pilot operations for which flight safety was compromised because of a significant increase in workload for the remaining crew.]
- (m) Fuel quantity level or distribution situations requiring the declaration of an emergency by the pilot, such as insufficient fuel, fuel exhaustion, fuel starvation, or inability to use all usable fuel on board.
- (n) Runway incursions classified with severity A. The *Manual on the Prevention of Runway Incursions (Doc 9870)* contains information on the severity classifications.
- (o) Take-off or landing incidents and incidents such as under-shooting, overrunning or running off the side of runways.

- (p) System failures ^b[including loss of power or thrust], weather phenomena, operations outside the approved flight envelope or other occurrences which caused or could have caused difficulties controlling the aircraft.
- (q) Failures of more than one system in a redundancy system mandatory for flight guidance and navigation.
- (r) The unintentional or, as an emergency measure, the intentional release of a slung load or any other load carried external to the aircraft.
- (s) ^b[retraction of a landing gear leg or wheels-up landing not classified as an accident.]
- (t) ^b[dragging during landing of a wing tip, an engine pod or any other part of the aircraft, when not classified as an accident.]

Schedule B

^b[See rule 2(1)]

GUIDANCE FOR DETERMINATION OF AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

1. If an engine separates from an aircraft, the event is categorized as an accident even if damage is confined to the engine.
2. A loss of engine cowls (fan or core) or reverser components which does not result in further damage to the aircraft is not considered an accident.
3. Occurrences where compressor or turbine blades or other engine internal components are ejected through the engine tail pipe are not considered an accident.
4. A collapsed or missing radome is not considered an accident unless there is related substantial damage in other structures or systems.
5. Missing flap, slat and other lift augmenting devices, winglets, etc., that are permitted for dispatch under the configuration deviation list (CDL) are not considered to be an accident.
6. Retraction of a landing gear leg, or wheels-up landing, resulting in skin abrasion only, and if the aircraft can be safely dispatched after minor repairs, or patching, and subsequently undergoes more extensive work to effect a permanent repair, then the occurrence would not be classified as an accident.
7. If the structural damage is such that the aircraft depressurises, cannot be pressurised, the occurrence is categorised as an accident.
8. The removal of components for inspection following an occurrence, such as the precautionary removal of an undercarriage leg following a low-speed runway excursion, while involving considerable work, is not considered an accident unless significant damage is found.
9. Occurrences that involve an emergency evacuation are not counted as an accident unless someone receives serious injuries or the ^a [aircraft has otherwise] sustained significant damage.

Note 1.- Regarding aircraft damage which adversely affects the structural strength, performance or flight characteristics, the aircraft may have landed safely, but cannot be safely dispatched on a further sector without repair.

Note 2.- If the aircraft can be safely dispatched after minor repairs and subsequently undergoes more extensive work to effect a permanent repair, then the occurrence would not be classified as an accident; likewise, if the aircraft can be dispatched under the CDL with the affected component removed, missing or inoperative, the repair would not be considered as a major repair and consequently the occurrence would not be considered an accident.

Note 3.- The cost of repairs, or estimated loss, such as provided by insurance companies may provide an indication of the damage sustained but should not be used as the sole guide as to whether the damage is sufficient to count the occurrence as an accident; likewise, an aircraft may be considered a "hull loss" because it is uneconomic to repair, without it having incurred sufficient damage to be classified as an accident.

[a] Amended by G.S.R. No. 338 (E) dated 28th March 2018

[b] Amended by G.S.R. No. 222 (E) dated 30th March 2021

[c] Amended by G.S.R. No. 310 (E) dated 22nd April 2022