

GACA Exemption No. 4-2020-02A

Extension and amendment of General Regulatory Exemption No: 4-2020-02

In response to the exceptional circumstances caused by the Covid-19 outbreak and its impact on the certificates, training, and qualifications of aviation personnel employed by Saudi Arabian air traffic and aeronautical telecommunication services providers, the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) granted an initial exemption Number 4-2020-02 to provide specific reliefs to GACAR Parts 64, 67, 171 and 173 ATC license holders and aeronautical telecommunication technicians from certain requirements pertaining to training, proficiency checks, ATS unit endorsements, and qualification requirements during the pandemic phase of COVID-19. The initial exemption has a validity of three months ending by July 10, 2020 and aimed to support the implementation of preventative measures, reduce the spread of COVID-19, and protect the public health and safety of aeronautical telecommunication technicians and ATC operational Staff.

By letter Number No# 6/735/1441 dated on June 17, 2020 and letter number 6/733/1441 dated on June 17, 2020, Saudi Air Navigation Services (SANS) reports that even lockdown and stay-at-home advisories are lifted, ATC license holders and aeronautical telecommunication technicians are facing difficulties and they are enable to comply with the requirements pertaining to:

- 1) The renewal of Medical certificates which require ATC controllers based at remote aerodromes to use various public transportation to reach the medical center and to undergo in-person medical examinations and which may further stress the healthcare system and increase the risk of infection through personal contact with the healthcare facilities and Staff.
- 2) English Language Proficiency (ELP) certificates which require ATC controllers to undergo in-person ELP exam in a center where there is no assurance that the social distancing is applied and increase the risk of infection through personal contact.
- 3) Conduct of ATC unit endorsements, refresher trainings, and annual proficiency checks as SANS is maintaining strict application of COVID-19 preventive measures issued by Saudi Ministry of Health regarding infection control procedures

1. Applicability:

The extension and amendment of General Regulatory Exemption No: 4-2020-02 is applicable to the same GACA regulation and requirements specified under the initial exemption.

2. Date of the Extension:

The extension and amendment of General Regulatory Exemption No: 4-2020-02 is granted with an effectivity date starting on **July 11, 2020**.

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3. Justification of the extension of the initial exemption:

As COVID-19 preventive measures remains mandatory to control and prevent the spread of the infections, there has been no change in the conditions and reasons relative to public interest and safety that were the basis for granting the initial exemption i.e. General Regulatory Exemption No: 4-2020-02. Moreover, the COVID-19 public health emergency continues to evolve, and the length and nature of its ongoing effects are uncertain, therefore there is a need to extend the timeframe of the initial General Regulatory Exemption No: 4-2020-02.

GACA has determined that the justification for the issuance of General Regulatory Exemption No: 4-2020-02 remains valid with respect to this exemption and is in the public interest. The extension and amendment of General Regulatory Exemption No: 4-2020-02 will extend the period of relief from the regulatory requirements for validity of ATC certificates, Medical certificates, ELP certificates, ATC unit endorsements, refresher trainings, and annual proficiency checks for all affected ATC staff and all aeronautical telecommunications (CNS/ATM) technicians as specified under this exemption.

4. Requirements on validity of licenses, endorsements and certificates issued in accordance with GACAR Parts 64, 67 and 171, and aeronautical telecommunications personnel competence assessments and recurrent training program conducted in accordance with GACAR Part 173 Subpart B:

The extension and amendment of General Regulatory Exemption No: 4-2020-02 is exempting all ATC Staff and aeronautical telecommunications (CNS/ATM) technicians who are unable to meet duration and renewal requirements that were defined under Section 4 of the initial exemption. The amended exemption is extending the validity period of all certificates, endorsements, and proficiency checks until **December 31, 2020.**

5. Conditions of the amended exemption:

For the amended exemption, the conditions defined under the initial exemption are applicable in addition to the following supplementary conditions:

- SANS must monitor traffic volume and introduce temporary adjustments to operating hours to protect Operational and technical personnel by ensuring enough controllers and technicians are available to staff the facilities during increase of traffic and peak hours.
- SANS must provide a revised plan to mitigate any potential risk introduced by extending the relief from the regulatory requirements related to the validity of ATC certificates, Medical certificates, ELP certificates, ATC unit endorsements, refresher trainings, and annual proficiency checks.

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6. Supporting Documentation for this amendment:

In addition to the documents that were considered as supporting material to the initial exemption, the amended exemption is also supported by the following additional documentation:

- (a) A Regulatory Exemption Assessment Report (Ref: ANSC-02 -COVID-19 Dated April 9th 2020).
- (b) GACA letter No# 5/18733/5 dated May 5, 2020 regarding the issuance of general exemption.
- (c) SANS letter No# 6/713/1441 dated on June 6, 2020 in the reply to the previous GACA letter.
- (d) SANS letter No# 6/735/1441 dated on June 6, 2020 requesting the on-line ELP test for its ACTOs due to precautionary measures during COVID-19.
- (e) SANS letter No# 6/733/1441 dated on June 6, 2020 requesting the extend of validity of the Medical certificate for its ATCOs due to precautionary measures during COVID-19.
- (f) COVID-19 Exemption Follow-up Report dated on June 15, 2020.
- (g) ATM Recovery Plan for Pandemic - Corona Virus (COVID19) SANS-ATM-PL-01 dated on May 13, 2020.
- (h) MED Recovery Plan for Pandemic – Corona Virus (COVID19) SANS-MED-PL-01 dated on May 5, 2020.
- (i) Safety Risk Assessment Report combining JACC & RACC Sectors SANS-ATS-SRA-021-2020 Version 1.2 dated on April 19, 2020.
- (j) COVID-19 Situational Service Level Agreement between ATSUs and MED sectors.
- (k) ICAO COVID-19 outbreak simplified procedure for air traffic management collaborative decision making and sharing of information, Edition 1.0 – May 2020.
- (l) Doc 10144 — ICAO Handbook for CAAs on the Management of Aviation Safety Risks related to COVID-19 (First Edition, May 2020).
- (m) CANSO COVID-19: Ensuring continuity of ATS service globally (version 1: April 2020)

7. Validity & Duration of the extension

The extension and amendment of General Regulatory Exemption No: 4-2020-02 is identified as General Regulatory Exemption No: 4-2020-02A and will have an immediate effect upon its release and promulgation until **December 31, 2020** unless previously revoked.

The General Regulatory Exemption No: 4-2020-02A is complementary to the initial General Regulatory Exemption No: 4-2020-02 which must be attached to it all the time.

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