

Foreign Airline Permits

International civil aviation is governed by the Chicago Convention. Under the Convention, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) is responsible for establishing minimum safety standards which contracting states are required to implement. States are required to recognise the certificates issued by other contracting states unless they have reason to believe that they have not been issued in accordance with ICAO standards. ICAO also audits contracting states' aviation authorities to help identify and address any deficiencies in the implementation of international standards.

Any airline from outside the EU, Iceland, Norway or Switzerland which wishes to pick up or put down passengers or cargo in the UK requires a permit from the Secretary of State for Transport. It is a condition of the permit that the airline should be operated in accordance with international safety standards established by ICAO.

If we have doubts about whether an aircraft or airline complies with international safety standards we will arrange for the aircraft to be inspected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Permits may be refused, and existing permits suspended or revoked by the Secretary of State. This may occur where there is a breach of a permit condition, which would include non-compliance with international safety standards; however action can also be taken for reasons other than safety. Permit decisions will be reviewed in the light of new information or changed circumstances.

Currently the Secretary of State is refusing or would refuse to issue permits to aircraft registered in or operated by the airlines with an Air Operators Certificate from any of the states listed below because of evidence that they are not receiving adequate regulatory oversight from their national aviation authorities:

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Equatorial Guinea

Liberia

Sierra Leone

Swaziland

Tajikistan

In addition, the Secretary of State has suspended or refused permits to the following airlines:

Air Mauritanie (Mauritania) because of operational safety concerns.

Phoenix Aviation (Kyrgyzstan) because of doubts about the airline's principal place of business.

Phuket Airlines (Thailand) because of operational safety concerns.

It should be noted that these airlines may be permitted to offer services to the UK, and issued with a permit, if these services are contracted out and operated by another airline.

The Department does not review the safety of airlines which do not operate to the UK; however, if information is available on such airlines it will be reflected in the Foreign Office's country specific travel advice, which can be found at:

www.fco.gov.uk