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SAFETY DAVID LEARMOUNT LONDON

ICAO in bid for global fatigue risk standard

New code to replace or augment pilot flight time limitations

Airlines may be soon be forced to shake up their approaches to managing pilot fatigue if an International Civil Aviation Organisation bid to set a global fatigue risk management standard is successful.

Delegates to the annual seminar of ICAO's fatigue risk management system (FRMS) forum, at Virgin Atlantic's London Gatwick base, were told that a global FRMS standard will be presented to the ICAO council for adoption in March 2011 and states would be obliged to set up means of compliance starting in November 2011 if the draft proposals are accepted.

If the process goes without a hitch, states would have to comply with fatigue risk management standards and recommended practices by November 2011.

ICAO's fatigue risk management project co-ordinator Michelle Millar says the proposal is for ICAO states to have some op-

tions. They could apply a prescriptive flight time limitations regime, or provide limitations with the option for operators of running a bespoke fatigue risk management system (FRMS) instead.

An operator could also be permitted to use flight time limitations in one part of its fleet and a fatigue risk management system in another.

Splitting the compliance methods within a single carrier might be done, for example, to take account of differences between the needs of the long-haul and short-haul fleets.

Millar, speaking at the FRMS forum seminar on 26 May, made it clear that rigid compliance with flight time limitations would be required until a carrier wanting to use an FRMS could demonstrate to its national aviation authority that it is ready to operate a fully compliant system within its organisation. ■