

<b>Safety Bulletin No.</b>	<b>2026 - 03</b>	<b>Date Issued</b>	April 2026
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Standard Phraseology in Emergency Communications</b>		
<b>Area of Concern</b>	Aerodrome Emergency Activations		
<b>Issued By</b>	George Cheriyan – Head of Security and Emergency Management		

This Safety Bulletin is issued to highlight the critical importance of clear communication and use of standard phraseology during emergencies.

## Background

Clear and effective communication during emergencies is critical to ensuring the correct and timely response from Air Traffic Control (ATC) and responding agencies. Recent operational observations across multiple aerodromes have identified inconsistent use of standard emergency phraseology, including under-declaration of emergencies and use of informal language.

In several instances, ATC has been required to interpret the severity of situations based on limited or unclear information, and in some cases escalate the response without explicit confirmation from flight crew. This introduces complexity, increases workload, and may result in either over or under deployment of emergency services.

The use of standard ICAO emergency phraseology is essential for safe and effective emergency response.

- MAYDAY - for grave and imminent danger requiring immediate assistance (Full Emergency)
- PAN PAN - for urgent situations that are not immediately life-threatening (Local Standby)

Clear and early declaration allows ATC to initiate the appropriate level of response without delay. Unclear or informal communication may result in delayed, inappropriate, or escalated response. ATC may upgrade response levels based on interpretation where insufficient information is provided. When in doubt, it is safer to declare an emergency.

## Immediate Actions

- All flight crew to use standard ICAO phraseology (MAYDAY / PAN PAN) when communicating emergencies
- Provide clear and concise information including nature of emergency
- Avoid use of informal or non-standard terminology during emergency communications
- Operators to reinforce correct emergency communication procedures through training and briefings
- All Aerodrome Emergency Committee members to promote a culture of clear, early, and accurate communication during emergencies