



PNG AIC Office, Level one, NAQJA Haus, 6 Mile  
PO Box 1709  
BOROKO 111  
National Capital District  
Papua New Guinea

Telephone : (675) 323 2911  
Facsimile : (675) 323 2139  
Email : hnamani@aic.gov.pg

*Our Ref: AIC 18-R03/17-1004*

**Safety recommendation: AIC 18-R03/17-1004**

**Addressed to: Hon. Alfred Manase, MP  
Minister for Civil Aviation**

**Date issued: 17 April 2018**

**Investigation link: AIC 17-1004**

**Action status: Issued**

**Safety deficiency description**

On 23 December 2017, at 00:10 UTC<sup>1</sup> (10:10 local), a Britten Norman BN-2A Islander aircraft, registered P2-ISM, owned and operated by North Coast Aviation, impacted a ridge, at about 9,500 ft on the ridge that runs down towards the Sapmanga Valley from the Sarawaget Ranges, Morobe Province. The aircraft impacted the ridge about 150 metres beyond the last GPS fix.

At 23:57 the aircraft was cleared to track to Nadzab and descend to 3,000 ft. The pilot was expected to contact Nadzab ATC (Nadzab Tower) by 00:22, prior to entering Nadzab controlled airspace. However, because the pilot had not established contact by 00:22, the Nadzab Tower controller initiated radio communication checks. At 00:32 the tower controller declared an INCERFA<sup>2</sup>.

The aircraft operator contacted the Nadzab Tower controller and reported that, according to their GPS tracker, P2-ISM was stationary between Yalumet and the Sidor Gap, Morobe Province. The tower controller, then upgraded to an ALERFA<sup>3</sup>, soon followed by a DETRESFA<sup>4</sup>, and notified Moresby Center.

The Moresby Center supervisor notified his manager, who advised him to contact the Center Coordinator.

The investigation has found that there is no Search and Rescue Coordination structure or operations procedures in PNG Air Services Limited in accordance with the *Standards and Recommended Practices of ICAO Annex 12*.

<sup>1</sup> The 24-hour clock, in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), is used in this report to describe the local time as specific events occurred. Local time in the area of the accident, Papua New Guinea Time (Pacific/Port Moresby Time) is UTC + 10 hours.

<sup>2</sup> INCERFA – The code word used to designate an uncertainty phase.

<sup>3</sup> ALERFA - The code word used to designate an alert phase.

<sup>4</sup> DETRESFA - The code word used to designate a distress phase.

Section 13 of the *Civil Aviation Act 2000* was repealed in the 2010 amendment. It had stated:

**FUNCTIONS OF THE AUTHORITY IN RELATION TO AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES, AERONAUTICAL COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES AND AERONAUTICAL NAVIGATION SERVICES.**

In furtherance of its principal air traffic services, aeronautical communications services and aeronautical navigation services functions under Section 11(2)(b), the functions of the Authority shall include:

- (a) ensuring the provision of navigational installations to permit safe navigation of aircraft within airspace administered by Papua New Guinea; and
- (b) ensuring the provision of the following services, when required, for the purpose of giving effect to the Convention or otherwise for purposes relating to safety, regularity, or efficiency of air navigation:
  - (i) air traffic services;
  - (ii) aeronautical information services;
  - (iii) search and rescue services;
  - (iv) aeronautical navigation services;
  - (v) aeronautical communications services; and
- (c) establishing, maintaining and operating a Rescue Co-ordination Centre for the conduct of such:
  - (i) aviation search and rescue operations; and
  - (ii) other search and rescue operations as the Minister may from time to time require; and
- (d) providing assistance and advice to the Minister and the Departmental Head for the purpose of giving effect to the Convention or otherwise for purposes relating to civil aviation including participating in the work of the ICAO.

With the repeal of Section 13, there was no legislative basis for Search and Rescue in PNG in accordance with *ICAO Annex 12*.

*Civil Aviation Amendment Act 2016* added new *Sections 8A and 8B*, which state.

**8A. SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS.**

- (1) The Minister -
  - (a) shall establish, maintain, and operate a search and rescue co-ordination centre to co-ordinate and conduct aviation search and rescue operations: and
  - (b) may exercise any powers that may be necessary or desirable –
    - (i) for effective co-ordination and performance of a search and rescue operation specified in Subsection (1); and
    - (ii) to implement any international convention or agreement relating to search and rescue to which Papua New Guinea is a party: and
  - (c) may appoint persons to, either generally or in any particular case, participate in or co-ordinate a search and rescue operation specified in Paragraph (a).
- (2) The Minister may authorise the payment, out of money appropriated for the purpose by Parliament, of an amount that the Minister considers appropriate to -
  - (a) any person who assisted in a search and rescue operation specified in Subsection (1)(a) at the request of a person appointed under Subsection (1)(c);or
  - (b) the owner of any vehicle, ship, or aircraft used in a search and rescue operation specified in Sub section (1)(a) in response to a request by a person appointed under Subsection (1)(c).

**8B. MINISTER MAY DIRECT AGENCIES \VJTH RESPECT TO SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS.**

The Minister may direct CASA, Papua New Guinea ASL or any government agency for which the Minister is responsible and whose functions are consistent with search and rescue operations, to do any or all of the following:

- (a) operate and maintain the search and rescue co-ordination centre established under Section 8A(1)(a); or
- (b) co-ordinate, or participate in the co-ordination of any search and rescue operation specified in Section 8A(1)(a); or
- (c) perform, or participate in the performance of any search and rescue operation specified in Section 8A(1)(a); or
- (d) exercise any or all of the powers of the Minister under Section 8A (1) (b) and (c) and Section 8A(2), as duly authorised by instrument of delegation.

*Civil Aviation Rule Part 172.67* states the coordination requirements between each ATS unit listed in the applicant's exposition, and further lists agencies with which coordination is to be established. It includes at point (7) search and rescue authorities.

The PNG Air Services Limited web site provides a 24-hour contact for a Rescue Coordination Centre, however there is no Rescue Coordination Centre in accordance with *Annex 12 Standards* (requirements).

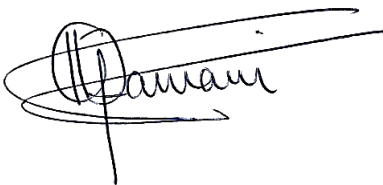
There is an urgent need to establish an *ICAO Annex 12 Standard*, Rescue Coordination Centre, for the safety of the aviation industry and the citizens of PNG, and international visitors to PNG. This need is further heightened with the expected influx of international visitors to PNG for APEC 2018, and the associated anticipated increase in aircraft movements during that period.

**Recommendation number AIC 18-R03/17-1004 to the Minister for Civil Aviation**

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission recommends that the Minister for Civil Aviation, in compliance with Sections 8A and 8B of the Civil Aviation Act 2000 (as amended in 2016), should ensure that a Rescue Coordination Centre is established, maintained, and operated, to co-ordinate and conduct aviation search and rescue operations in PNG. This will also ensure compliance with *ICAO Annex 12*, thereby specifically complying with *Section 8A(1)(b)(ii)* of the Act

**Action requested**

The AIC requests that the Minister for Civil Aviation note recommendation *AIC 18-R03/17-1004*, and provide a response to the AIC within 90 days of the issue date, and explain (including with evidence) how he has addressed the safety deficiency identified in the AIC investigation report *AIC 17-1004*.



**HUBERT NAMANI, LLB**

*Chief Commissioner*

18 April 2018