

DGCA defers its deadline for pilot rest norms

- A Monitor Desk Report

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New Delhi: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Tuesday (March 26) lifted the June 1 deadline for implementing the new pilot rest norms.

The flight duty time limitation, or FDTL, norms guaranteed sufficient rest for pilots, minimising the risk of untoward incidents. The new FDTL norms, issued in January, increased pilot rest time.

The regulator on Tuesday said airlines can continue to comply with the old FDTL norms, issued in 2019, "till approval of their respective scheme in compliance with this CAR (civil aviation requirement)".

Last month, the Federation of Indian Airlines — which comprises IndiGo, Air India, Vistara, and SpiceJet — had written a letter to the regulator asking it to defer the June 1 deadline by one year as about 25 per cent more pilots would be needed to implement the new norms. The

airlines had said that they wouldn't be able to hire and train these many pilots by June 1, forcing them to cancel 15-20 per cent of their flights.

On March 15, the regulator had refused to extend the June 1 deadline.

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The new norms increased weekly rest periods for flight crew to 48 hours a week from the earlier 36 hours. The definition of 'night' was also tweaked. It earlier meant the time between midnight and 5 am. But this was increased till 6 am.

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