

## DGCA fines IndiGo Rs 5 lakh

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Indian aviation watchdog, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) imposed a penalty of ₹ 5 lakh on India's largest airline, IndiGo, after a special child along with his parents were denied boarding at Ranchi Airport on May 7.

DGCA said that special situations deserve extraordinary responses but the airline staff failed to rise up to the occasion and in the process committed lapses in adherence to the letter and spirit of the Civil Aviation Requirements (Regulations).

“In view of this, the competent authority in DGCA has decided to impose a penalty of Rs. Five Lakhs on the airline under the provisions of the relevant Aircraft Rules,” said Arun Kumar, director general of DGCA.

“A more compassionate handling would have smoothed the nerves, calmed the child and would have obviated the need for the extreme step resulting in denied boarding to the passengers,” said the aviation regulator's statement.

This comes after the minister of civil aviation, Jyotiraditya Scindia, on May 9, said

that he was investigating the matter himself and would ensure that appropriate action was taken. “There is zero tolerance towards such behaviour. No human being should have to go through this! Investigating the matter by myself, post which appropriate action will be taken,” he said in a tweet.

“In the case involving a special child with reduced mobility, who along with the other family members were denied boarding at Ranchi Airport on May 7 2022, an enquiry was conducted by DGCA and based on the findings during the enquiry, a show cause notice was issued to Indigo Airline through its authorized representative,” DGCA said.

According to IndiGo, the ground staff had waited for the child to calm down till the last minute, but to no avail. IndiGo’s comment on the DGCA order is awaited.

DGCA said: “Further to meet the ends of justice, a personal hearing along with the opportunity of making written submissions was afforded by the DGCA and after following the due process of law, it has been observed that the handling of the special child by the Indigo ground staff was deficient and ended up exacerbating the situation.”

The aviation regulator said that in order to stave off such situations in future, it will revisit its own regulations and bring about the necessary changes in due course and mandate written consultation with the airport doctor on the state of health of the passenger as well as with the commander of the aircraft for his/her opinion in allowing such passenger on board.

“Airlines should also revisit their standard operating procedures (SOP) and training processes for dealing with such cases, in order to bring a more humane touch,” DGCA concluded.

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