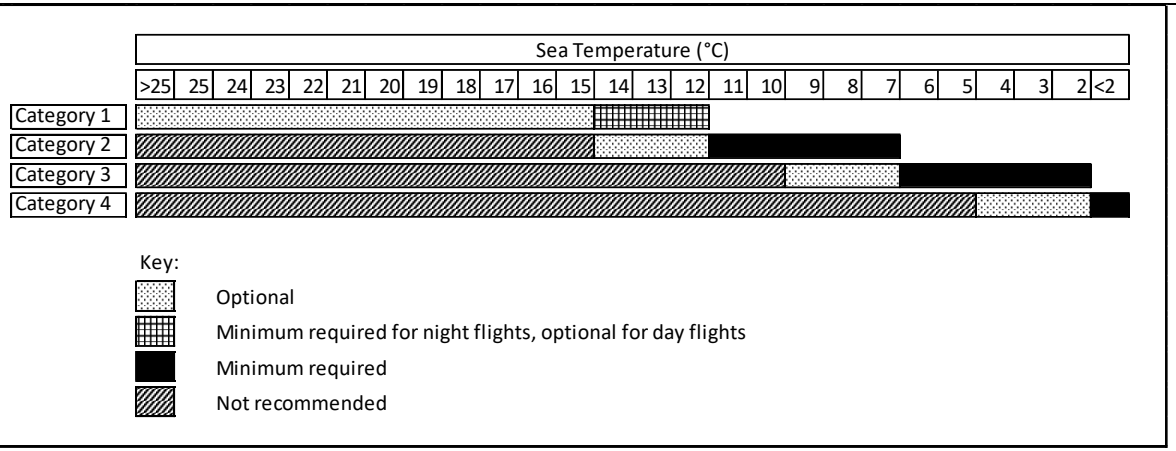
General update of the Air Operations Regulations, Specific Approval SPA.HOFO

Implementing Rule Changes & Associated AMC/GM

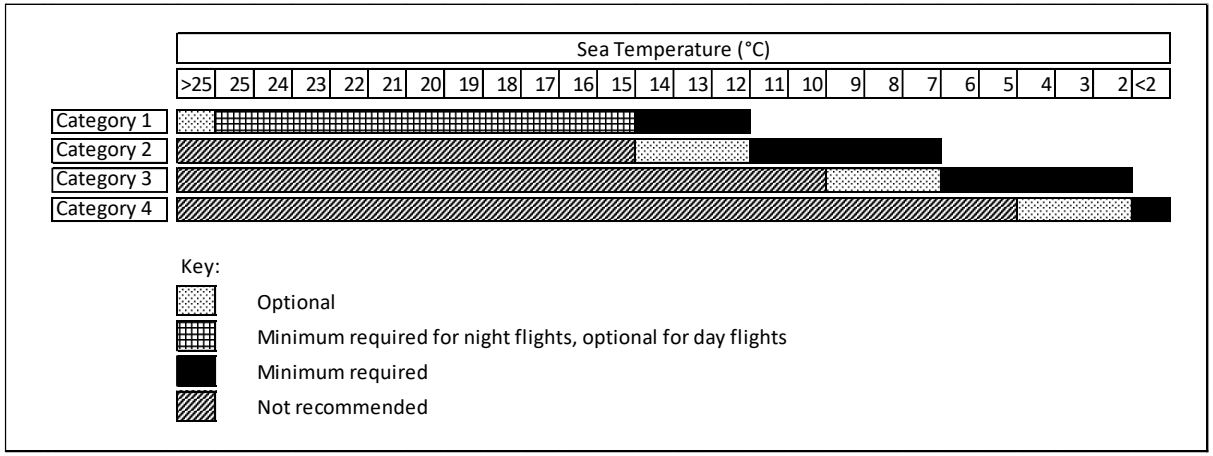
NB: New text underlined, existing text to be deleted ~~struck through~~.

Item	Reference	Text
1	SPA.HOFO.110(b)	The operator shall ensure that: (1) an operational flight plan is prepared prior to each flight; (2) the passenger safety briefing also includes any specific information on offshore related items and is provided prior to boarding the helicopter; (3) each member of the flight crew wears an approved survival suit as appropriate considering the water temperature and estimated rescue time; the level of insulation provided shall be sufficient for the prevailing conditions and not excessive; ~~(i) when the weather report or forecasts available to the pilot-in-command/commander indicate that the sea temperature will be less than plus 10°C during the flight; or~~ ~~(ii) when the estimated rescue time exceeds the calculated survival time; or~~ ~~(iii) when the flight is planned to be conducted at night in a hostile environment;~~
2	AMC1 SPA.HOFO.110(b)(3)	**ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES AND EQUIPMENT FOR OPERATIONS IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT — FLIGHT CREW SURVIVAL SUITS** (a) All flight crew members should wear an approved survival suit if one or more of the following criteria are met: (1) the weather report or forecasts available to the commander/pilot-in-command indicates/indicate that the water temperature will be below plus 12 °C during the flight; (2) the estimated rescue time exceeds the calculated survival time; (3) the flight is planned to be conducted at night and the weather report or forecasts available to the commander/pilot-in-command indicates/indicate that the water temperature will be below plus 15 °C during the flight. (b) Survival suits that are manufactured after 01 January 2026 should meet standard BS EN 4863:2023. (c) The operator should ensure that flight crew survival suits provide appropriate insulation in relation to water temperature as per Table 1. **Table 1: Survival suite insulation categories — flight crews**

		 *Note 1: The insulation categories are those defined in standard BS EN 4863:2023.* *Note 2: Survival suits approved to ETSO-2C502 or ETSO-2C503 are equivalent to BS EN 4863:2023 Category 3 in terms of insulation.*
3	GM1 SPA.HOFO.110(b)(3)	**ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES AND EQUIPMENT FOR OPERATIONS IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT — FLIGHT CREW SURVIVAL SUITS** The thermal insulation required to be provided by the survival suit will depend primarily on the sea temperature and the expected rescue time. Insufficient insulation can degrade prospects of survival, however too much insulation can also present hazards such as thermal stress to the wearer and restriction of movement. It is therefore important that the level of insulation provided is both sufficient for the prevailing conditions and not excessive. To facilitate this objective the four categories of immersion suit with differing levels of insulation detailed in AMC1 SPA.HOFO.110(b)(3) Table 1 should be available. The following points should be considered when selecting the Category of survival suit to be worn: (a) When the operator considers it appropriate, the flight crew may wear an immersion suit system with a lower level of insulation than passengers due to the imperative to maintain flight safety. (b) A higher level or insulation is required for night operations due to the expectation that the rescue time is likely to be longer at night than by day. (c) The operator may consider a daily surface sea temperature forecast or a recent water temperature observation at a location that is relevant for the expected flights on a given day.
4	GM1 SPA.HOFO.110(b)(10)	The UK AIP (GEN 1.6 Para 3.6) contains restrictions in relation to the sea conditions over which flights may be conducted under an Offshore Specific Approval (SPA.HOFO). In particular, the significant wave height of the sea over which the flight is intended to be conducted to or from an offshore location: (a) must be 6 metres or less; and

		(b) must not exceed the certificated ditching performance of the helicopter.
5	SPA.HOFO.115	The operator shall only use offshore locations that are suitable in relation to size and mass of the type of helicopter and to the operations concerned. In particular: (a) A specified operator shall not conduct commercial air transport offshore operations to an offshore location without fire-fighting provisions that are fully compliant with the CAA Publication on Standards for Offshore Helicopter Landing Areas [in force at the appropriate time] unless doing so in accordance with procedures detailed in the same CAA publication or equivalent provisions as are approved by the CAA. (b) A specified operator shall not conduct commercial air transport offshore operations at night to an offshore location unless that location his equipped with lighting comprising lit Touchdown/Positioning Marking and lit Heliport Identification Marking meeting the specification contained in CAP 437 (9th Edition as amended and published by the CAA), Appendix C or an earlier specification approved by the CAA. (c) From 1 April 2021, a specified operator shall not conduct commercial air transport offshore operations to an offshore location if the helideck motion exceeds stable deck conditions unless that location has a Helideck Monitoring System (HMS) meeting Rev.9b or later version of the HMS standard published on the Helideck Certification Agency's web site, or provisions as are approved by the CAA.
6	SPA.HOFO.160	(d) Unless otherwise provided for by Regulation (EU) No 1332/2011, helicopters used in CAT operations with a maximum certificated take-off mass (MCTOM) of more than 3175 kg or a maximum operational passenger seating configuration (MOPSC) of more than 9: (1) shall be equipped with ACAS I or ACAS II from 01 January 2026, and (2) shall be equipped with ACAS II from 01 January 2028.
7	SPA.HOFO.165(a)	*Life jackets* Approved life jackets shall be worn at all times by all persons on board unless approved integrated survival suits that meet the combined requirement of the survival suit and life jacket are worn.
8	SPA.HOFO.165(b)	*Survival suits* All passengers on board shall wear an approved survival suit as appropriate considering the water temperature and estimated rescue time. The level of insulation provided shall be sufficient for the prevailing conditions and not excessive. ~~(1) when the weather report or forecasts available to the commander/pilot-in-command indicate that the sea temperature will be less than plus 10 °C during the flight; or~~ ~~(2) when the estimated rescue time exceeds the calculated survival time; or~~

		~~(3) when the flight is planned to be conducted at night.~~
9	SPA.HOFO.165(c)	*Emergency breathing system* All persons on board shall carry and be instructed in the use of approved emergency breathing systems. ~~Emergency breathing systems manufactured after 1 January 2025 shall be approved in accordance with the applicable airworthiness requirements.~~
10	SPA.HOFO.165(d)	*Life rafts* (1) All life rafts carried shall be installed so as to be usable in the sea conditions in which the helicopter's ditching, flotation, and trim characteristics were evaluated for certification. (2) All life rafts carried shall be approved and shall be installed so as to facilitate their ready use in an emergency. (3) The number of life rafts installed: (i) in the case of a helicopter carrying less than 12 persons, at least one life raft with a rated capacity of not less than the maximum number of persons on board; or (ii) in the case of a helicopter carrying more than 11 persons, at least two life rafts, sufficient together to accommodate all persons capable of being carried on board and, if one is lost, the remaining life raft(s) having the overload capacity sufficient to accommodate all persons on the helicopter. (4) Each life raft shall contain at least one approved survival emergency locator transmitter (ELT(S)); and (5) Each life raft shall contain life-saving equipment, including means of sustaining life, as appropriate to the flight to be undertaken.
11	SPA.HOFO.165(e)	*Emergency cabin lighting* The helicopter shall be equipped with an approved emergency lighting system with an independent power supply to provide a source of general cabin illumination to facilitate the evacuation of the helicopter.
12	SPA.HOFO.165(j)	For commercial operations at a distance from the shore greater than 10 minutes' flight time at normal cruise speed, it shall be easy to visually identify the helicopter and its orientation in the event of a capsize.
13	AMC1 SPA.HOFO.165	**LIFEJACKETS** (a) Lifejackets that are manufactured after 01 January 2026 should meet standard BS EN 4862:2023. (b) The lifejacket or integrated survival suit should be capable of self-righting an unconscious person with all required survival equipment worn, except where a Category 4 survival suit is required to be used.

14	GM1 SPA.HOFO.165(a)	**LIFEJACKETS** Survival suits with high levels of insulation require larger lifejackets/buoyancy elements in order to maintain the required self-righting performance. For the highest level of insulation present in Category 4 survival suits, the size of lifejacket/buoyancy elements required may be impractical. In the case of Category 4 survival suits only, priority is to be given to the thermal insulating properties required and it is accepted that the full self-righting capability may not be achieved as provided for in the survival equipment specifications.
15	AMC1 SPA.HOFO.165(b)	**PASSENGER SURVIVAL SUITS** (a) All passengers on board should wear an approved survival suit provided one or more of the following criteria are met: (1) the weather report or forecasts available to the commander/pilot-in-command indicates/indicate that the water temperature will be below plus 15 °C during the flight; (2) the estimated rescue time exceeds the calculated survival time; (3) the flight is planned to be conducted at night and the weather report or forecasts available to the commander/pilot-in-command indicates/indicate that the water temperature will be below plus 25 °C during the flight. (b) Survival suits that are manufactured after 01 January 2026 should meet standard BS EN 4863:2023. (c) The operator should ensure that survival suits provide appropriate insulation in relation to water temperature as per Table 1. **Table 1: Survival suit insulation categories — passengers**  *Note 1: The insulation categories are those defined in standard BS EN 4863:2023.*

		Note 2: Survival suits approved to ETSO-2C502 or ETSO-2C503 are equivalent to BS EN 4863:2023 Category 3 in terms of insulation.
16	GM1 SPA.HOFO.165(b)	**ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES AND EQUIPMENT FOR OPERATIONS IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT — PASSENGER SURVIVAL SUITS** The thermal insulation required to be provided by the survival suit will depend primarily on the sea temperature and the expected rescue time. Insufficient insulation can degrade prospects of survival, however too much insulation can also present hazards such as thermal stress to the wearer and restriction of movement. It is therefore important that the level of insulation provided is both sufficient for the prevailing conditions and not excessive. To facilitate this objective the four categories of immersion suit with differing levels of insulation detailed in AMC1 SPA.HOFO.165(b) Table 1 should be available. The following points should be considered when selecting the Category of survival suit to be worn: (a) A higher level or insulation is required for night operations due to the expectation that the rescue time is likely to be longer at night than by day. (b) The operator may consider a daily surface sea temperature forecast or a recent water temperature observation at a location that is relevant for the expected flights on a given day.
17	AMC1 SPA.HOFO.165(c)	**EMERGENCY BREATHING SYSTEM (EBS)** (a) The EBS of point SPA.HOFO.165(c) should be an EBS ~~system~~ capable of rapid underwater deployment. (b) EBSs that meet CAP 1034 specifications are deemed compliant with point (a). (c) EBSs that are manufactured after 1 January 2026 should meet BS EN 4856:2023. (d) Instruction in the use of EBS should, as a minimum, include the EBS manufacturer's minimum recommended training.
18	AMC1 SPA.HOFO.165(d)(e)	Life rafts that are manufactured after 1 January 2026 should meet BS EN 4886:2024.
19	AMC1 SPA.HOFO.165(h)(b)	an opening in the passenger compartment should be considered suitable as an underwater escape facility if the following criteria are met: (1) the means of opening should be rapid and obvious and should not require any exceptional effort: (i) where an elbow strike technique is to be used for opening push-out windows, the exit or opening should meet the opening effort limitations set for emergency exits by FAA AC 29-2C AC 29.809 initial issue of 30 September 1999 or any subsequent issue. Otherwise, the opening effort should be less than or equal to 18.1 kg (40 lb). (ii) for lever-operated exits, the opening effort should be less than or equal to 15.9 kg (35 lb).
20	AMC1 SPA.HOFO.165(j)	**UNDERSIDE PAINTING OR MARKING**

		The bottom surface of the fuselage should be painted or marked with at least three chevrons. The chevron tips should be on the centre line of the fuselage and should point to the nose of the rotorcraft. Their overall width should not be less than half that of the fuselage. The thickness of the chevrons should be between a quarter and a third of their overall width. The colour of the chevrons should be chosen to provide a good contrast to the sea during day and night (e.g. red, yellow with reflective material) and the fuselage bottom surface.