



CIVIL AVIATION SAFETY AUTHORITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

SAFETY ALERT BULLETIN (SAB)

NO: 03/2026

DATE: 01/08/2026

A SAB contains important safety information and may include recommended action. SAB content should be especially valuable to air carriers in meeting their statutory duty to provide service with the highest degree of safety in the public interest. Besides the specific action recommended in a SAB, an alternative action may be as effective in addressing the safety issue named in the SAB.

TITLE: Addressing Risk Associated with Passenger Non-Compliance and Retention of Carry-On Baggage and Personal Items During Emergency Evacuations.

OBJECTIVE: This SAB serves to alert all aviation stakeholders of their respective safety obligations during an emergency evacuation and support IATA's *"Save a Life, Not a Bag"* safety campaign, launched at the IATA 2026 AGM.

This SAB also contains information and recommended actions that the Civil Aviation Safety Authority of Papua New Guinea (CASA PNG) strongly recommends, for air operators and the general public to consider.

This SAB serves to emphasize the operational and safety-critical importance of strict passenger compliance with crewmember instructions during emergency evacuations. Specifically, it addresses the adverse effects of passengers attempting to evacuate with carry-on items, which can significantly impede evacuation procedures and increase the potential for injury or fatality.

BACKGROUND:

The International Air Transport Association (IATA), Director Safety, Mr Mark Searle, on 12 June 2026, wrote to the Director of Civil Aviation, Papua New Guinea, Mr Benedict I. Oraka, extending IATA's sincere appreciation for Papua New Guinea's leadership in advancing aviation safety across the globe. In the same letter IATA sought PNG's support for their *"Save a Life, Not a Bag"* safety campaign.

Passenger behaviour during emergency evacuations remains a shared responsibility across the aviation ecosystem. By working together, regulators, airlines, airports, and industry bodies can strengthen public understanding and ultimately enhance survivability in rare but critical situations related to aircraft evacuations.

Operational data, post-event analysis, and safety reports have identified a recurring safety hazard: passenger attempts to retrieve carry-on items during evacuations. This behavior directly affects safety by undermining evacuation efficiency. It has been cited as a contributing factor in delayed evacuations, increased injury rates, and compromised survivability during time-critical emergencies involving smoke, fire, or structural damage.

DISCUSSION:

Evidence from accident and incident reports has repeatedly shown that, during emergency evacuations, some passengers attempt to retrieve carry-on items despite clear safety instructions to leave all belongings behind.

IATA, on behalf of our 377 Member Airlines carrying nearly 90% of all commercial passengers, are launching a coordinated global awareness campaign aimed at addressing this critical and persistent safety issue observed during aircraft emergency evacuations:

Passenger retrieval of carry-on items during emergency evacuations introduces numerous risks and hazards, including but not limited to:

- Delay evacuation, increasing overall risk to passengers and crew
- Cause injuries, both to the individual and others, particularly on evacuation slides
- Obstruct aisles and exits, significantly hindering the flow of passengers
- Compromise survivability, especially in time-critical situations such as fire or smoke-filled cabins

Aircraft are certified to be evacuated within 90 seconds under specific conditions. Any delay caused by non-compliance with safety instructions can have serious consequences.

The proposed IATA safety campaign aims to raise passenger awareness and reinforce a simple but vital safety message: "Every second counts. Save a life, not a bag."

CASA PNG fully supports IATA's ***"Save a Life, Not a Bag"*** safety campaign and encourages its Airlines and all fare-paying passengers to take note and support the objectives of this campaign which are to:

- Educate passengers on the importance of complying with crew instructions during emergencies
- Influence passenger behaviour to discourage baggage retrieval during evacuations
- Support crew authority by reinforcing pre-flight safety messaging
- Promote consistency of safety communication across airlines and jurisdiction

RECOMMENDED SAFETY ACTIONS:

CASA PNG respectfully requests all PNG Airlines to support the IATA “Save a Life, Not a Bag” safety campaign in the following areas:

- Operators should evaluate their emergency evacuation procedures, training and emergency announcements and commands to address passenger non-compliance particularly in relation to carry-on item retrieval. A coordinated approach rooted in regulatory compliance, operational best practice, and clear public communication may contribute significantly to reducing evacuation times and preserving life in time-critical emergencies.

Operators should consider the following:

A. Safety Management System (SMS).

Operators should leverage their SMS to evaluate evacuation procedures and identify potential hazards, implementing mitigation strategies as appropriate.

B. Safety Briefings.

- Ensure safety briefings instruct passengers to leave all belongings behind in the event of an evacuation.
- Use standardized, concise messaging stating that all bags or personal belongings must be left behind with no exceptions.
- Evaluate exit row passenger briefing to ensure effectiveness.

C. Passenger Outreach and Education Campaigns

- Consider communication methods to highlight consequences of non-compliance with crewmember commands regarding retrieval of personal items during an evacuation.
- Display visual content in airport terminals and boarding areas demonstrating appropriate evacuation behavior and consequences of non-compliance with crewmember commands.
- Use universally recognizable symbols or pictograms to convey messages across language barriers.
- Incorporate messaging that appeals to collective responsibility (e.g., “Help everyone get out safely—leave your bags.”).
- Establish and normalize expected behavior by promoting the idea that “everyone leaves bags behind.”

OTHER REFERENCE INFORMATION: Other related information on the above can be found in:

1. IATA Letter to Director of Civil Aviation, Papua New Guinea dated 12 June 2026.
2. US FAA/DOT SAFO 25003 dated 16 September 2025.

ENQUIRIES:

For any further enquiries regarding the contents of this Safety Alert Bulletin (SAB), you may contact the CASA PNG Safety Operations Inspector (Cabin Safety):

Ms Nanai Na'o Flight Operations Branch Safety Regulation Division
Civil Aviation Safety Authority of Papua New Guinea P.O.BOX 1941 Boroko, NCD, PNG
Email: nnao@casapng.gov.pg