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Cabin air quality on civil aircraft – Chemical compounds

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Qualité de l'air en cabine d'avions civils ç Composés
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Kabinenluftqualität in Verkehrsflugzeugen - Chemische
Parameter

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Contents	Page
European foreword	5
Introduction	6
1 Scope	7
2 Normative references	7
3 Terms and definitions	7
4 Cabin air quality — chemical compounds	11
4.1 Chemical compounds in cabin air	11
4.2 Sources of chemical compounds.....	11
4.3 Sources of engine oil leakage in the bleed air system	11
4.4 Fume event.....	12
4.5 Marker compounds.....	12
4.6 Environmental control systems (ECS).....	12
5 Precautionary Principle and hierarchy of controls	12
5.1 General.....	12
5.2 Precautionary Principle	13
5.3 Hierarchy of controls.....	13
5.4 Elimination measures	14
5.5 Mitigation measures	14
6 Filtration	15
6.1 General.....	15
6.2 Recirculation cabin air filtration.....	15
6.3 Catalytic conversion filtration	16
7 Air monitoring	16
7.1 General.....	16
7.2 Air monitoring planning/development.....	17
7.2.1 Overview	17
7.2.2 Overview of sampling environment and objectives.....	17
7.2.3 Defining flight phases and whether occupied or unoccupied.....	17
Table 1 — Possible aircraft system configuration settings by flight phase	18
7.2.4 Defining sampling locations.....	18
7.3 Air monitoring methodology	19
7.3.1 Real-time monitoring.....	19
7.3.2 Time-integrated monitoring.....	19
8 Preventative and corrective actions	21
8.1 General.....	21
8.2 Preventative measures pre-flight	21
8.3 Corrective measures in-flight.....	21
8.4 Corrective measures post-flight	22
8.5 Aircraft Maintenance Manual (AMM)	22
9 Monitoring of air crew and passengers	22
9.1 Monitoring air crew	22
9.2 Monitoring passengers	23

10	Data compilation, analysis and reporting	23
10.1	General	23
10.2	Data compilation	24
10.2.1	Relevant airline operator reports	24
10.2.2	Air crew fume event reports	25
10.3	Analysis and reporting	26
10.3.1	Analysis	26
11	Airline worker education and training	27
11.1	General	27
11.2	Recommended programme elements, by work group	27
11.2.1	Programme provisions applicable to pilots, cabin crew and maintenance workers	27
11.2.2	Pilot-specific training and education	27
11.2.3	Cabin crew-specific training and education	28
11.2.4	Maintenance worker-specific training and education	28
Annex A (informative)	Environmental Control Systems (ECS)	29
A.1	General	29
A.2	Bleed air environmental control systems (ECS)	29
	Figure A.1 — Typical schematic for a bleed air ECS	30
A.3	Bleed-free environmental control system	30
	Figure A.2 — Typical bleed-free ECS architecture	31
Annex B (normative)	Chemical marker compounds	32
	Table B.1 — Sources of airborne contaminants and their associated chemical marker compounds	32
	Table B.2 — Reliability ratings for the presence of chemical marker compounds, according to each source of contamination	34
Annex C (informative)	Precautionary Principle	37
C.1	Precautionary Principle	37
C.2	Precautionary Principle considerations: background information	38
Annex D (informative)	Approaches for online monitoring	40
D.1	General	40
D.2	Indicative chemical marker compounds	40
D.3	Pattern recognition	40
D.4	Differential measurement	40
Annex E (informative)	Reference method for real-time and time-integrated measurement of chemical marker compounds and (ultra) fine particles	41
	Table E.1 — Examples of standardized methods for real-time and time-integrated measurements	41
	Table E.2 — Examples of possible methods for real-time measurement of chemical marker compounds and ultrafine particles	51
Annex F (informative)	Examples of best practice intended to prevent or minimize contamination	53

CEN/TR 17904:2022 (E)

Table F.1 — Examples of best practice for manufacturers, airline operators, pilots and maintenance operations to prevent or minimize contamination of the aircraft ventilation supply air system	53
Annex G (informative) Chemical marker compounds introduced into the cabin	55
Table G.1 — Chemical marker compounds introduced into the cabin via the outside air to the ventilation system	55
Table G.2 — Chemical marker compounds generated within the aircraft cabin environment	57
Annex H (informative) Sources of engine oil leakage into the bleed air system and ventilation supply air	58
H.1 Description of oil lubrication system	58
Figure H.1 — Typical oil-bearing pump	58
H.2 Description of seal technology	59
H.3 Oil path into bleed air system and ventilation supply air	59
H.4 Maintenance response to oil fumes sourced to bleed air system (renumber H.4)	60
Annex I (informative) Overview of aircraft cabin air and bleed air monitoring studies	61
I.1 Introduction	61
Table I.1 — Overview of aircraft cabin air and bleed air monitoring studies	61
I.2 References cited in Table I.1	70
Bibliography	73

European foreword

This document (CEN/TR 17904:2022) has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 436 “Cabin air quality”, the secretariat of which is held by AFNOR.

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CEN/TR 17904:2022 (E)

Introduction

Air quality on civil aircraft requires particular attention, given the characteristics of the cabin environment.

An environmental control system (ECS) is used to regulate the aircraft cabin pressure, temperature and ventilation supply air to provide a safe and comfortable environment for the passengers and air crew. The aircraft cabin by design and operation is enclosed and is a densely occupied environment (with only a small amount of per person dilution volume), creating the potential for elevated levels of bio-effluents in the cabin, such as carbon dioxide (see Annex A). ECS architecture on civil passenger aircraft can be broadly separated in two categories: bleed air ECS systems and bleed free ECS systems (see Annex A). Most aircraft manufactured today, and nearly all aircraft in service, have bleed air ECS.

This document focuses on the chemical compounds potentially present in cabin air. It sets out recommendations and supporting annexes to enable airline operators, manufacturers and suppliers to identify - and either prevent or mitigate - exposure to contaminants in the cabin air, with particular emphasis on bleed air contaminants sourced to or generated from engine oil and hydraulic fluid. This includes some limited measures intended to protect workers assigned to troubleshoot and service the aircraft ventilation supply air systems.

NOTE Aircraft accident investigation agencies, aviation regulators from the EU and US, and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) have recognized that bleed air contamination can compromise flight safety.

The recommendations in this document take into account that the fluids used in aviation (including jet engine oils) and their pyrolysis products are complex mixtures. Some of these mixtures contain organophosphates, ultra-fine particles, and other chemical compounds.

The recommendations in the document take into account current and developing legal frameworks in order to enable the industry to meet their legal obligation to provide a safe environment for air crew and passengers. This document also acknowledges, at the European Commission level, the value of using the Precautionary Principle in relation to risk management, and the use of risk assessment in this industry to protect workers and the environment.

Within this document, emphasis is placed upon exposure prevention, sensor technology, worker training, reporting systems, and collation of data and information from air crew and passengers. Safety Management Systems (SMS) can be a useful tool to enable operators to apply these measures to monitor and respond to system degradation.

This document does not define acceptability/suitability for health, comfort, safety, or airworthiness of the cabin air.

Annex I contains a summary of maximum levels of the marker compounds listed in Annex B that have been published.

1 Scope

This document defines recommendations dealing with the quality of the air on civil aircraft concerning chemical compounds potentially originating from, but not limited, to, the ventilation air supplied to the cabin and flight deck.

A special emphasis is on the engine and APU bleed air contaminants potentially brought into the cabin through the air conditioning, pressurization and ventilation systems.

This document is applicable to civil aircraft in operation from the period that is defined as when the first person enters the aircraft until the last person leaves the aircraft.

This document recommends means to prevent exposure to certain type of chemical compounds, including those that could cause adverse effects, taking into account the Precautionary Principle.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

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