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DGCA to engage AAI in CNS, ATM systems

2/13/2009 9:07:34 PM



To tide over the manpower shortage in critical departments at airports, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will engage the services of trained personnel from the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to carry out safety over-sight functions. The two departments, where this is proposed to be done are the Communications, Navigation and Surveillance (CNS) and Air Traffic Management (ATM) at airports pan-India.

Presently, the Aerodrome Standard Directorate, a part of the DGCA, performs these functions. This would, however, be interim DGCA said, in a draft circular, adding that "the seconded inspectors will also assist DGCA in the preparations of guidelines, checklists and

other associate works."

The seconded CNS inspectors will have the powers to carry out periodic inspection and surveillance of the aeronautical telecommunication stations to ensure that the performance and maintenance of the CNS equipment is in accordance with the stipulated guidelines, the DGCA said.

Besides, commissioning of the CNS, the inspectors would also assist the Directorate of Airspace and Air Traffic Management in the DGCA for certification and formulation of related regulation and guidance material amongst others, the draft circular said.

The ATM inspectors would 'oversight' all matters related to licensing of Air Traffic Control Officers (ATCOs) as also with matters relating to airspace management like navigation procedures for ATS route, performance-based navigation procedures and terminal Instrument Approach Landing (IAL) procedures, among others.

However, according to an AAI official, the DGCA decision to engage AAI personnel could lead to more short fall in the numbers of CNS/ATM officials within the undertaking. "AAI already has a shortage of CNS and ATM personnel. Currently, we have some 1,800 CNS officials against a sanctioned strength of 3,200 officials," the AAI official said.

Besides, the ATM is already falling short by at least 500 officials. It currently has 1,700 personnel whereas the total sanctioned strength is 2,200, he said. "In the backdrop of 43 and 25 per cent manpower shortage in both CNS and ATM, the DGCA's new guidelines, will only aggravate the manpower shortage situation in AAI," the official said.

(With inputs from agencies)

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