

Reference Material – Extension of FDP

- VAA SSM7 – Fatigue Risk Management System (VA internal document)
- CAAP 48-01 v3.2
- CAO 48.1 Plain English Guide v2.1 (May 2021)

VAA VAI SSM7 – Terms and Definitions

A.1.8 Extensions and Recovery

A Pilot may, in unforeseen operational circumstances, at their discretion, extend an FDP beyond that permitted in Table A.1-1 - Acclimatised or Table A.1-2 - Unknown State of Acclimatisation and/or FDP limit determined by Appendix A.1.2 - Limitations on Consecutive Early Starts, Item (2) , provided the Pilot is satisfied that the flight can be made safely in accordance with Section 5.1.4 - Pilot's Responsibilities Around Exercising Discretion. The extension will be calculated according to what actually happens, not on what was planned to happen. An extension of one (1) hour is the maximum permitted, except that an extension of two (2) hours is the maximum permitted, if:

1. The extension is necessary to allow the aircraft to return to a Virgin Australia Flight Crew Base; and
2. The FCM should undertake an assessment of their alertness using one or more of the approved alertness evaluation tools, refer Section 2 - FRMS Risk and Hazard Identification.

A Pilot may, in unforeseen operational circumstances, at their discretion, extend an FDP following a reduced Rest Period, only exceptionally, and then only to the extent necessary to allow for unforeseen circumstances that become apparent during the last Sector.

A Pilot exercising their discretion to extend an FDP in accordance with Appendix A.1.8 – Extensions and Recovery may only extend the Flight time limit in Appendix A.1.18 - Limits on Flight Time, Item (1) by 50% of the extended FDP value (i.e. 30mins in the case of a 1hr FDP extension, or 60mins in the case of a 2 hour FDP extension).

Pilots will not be disciplined or otherwise subjected to any negative repercussions for failing to exercise their discretion to extend an FDP.

Definitions (R5):

Unforeseen Operational Circumstances	Means an unplanned exceptional event that becomes evident after the commencement of the FDP (e.g. Such as un-forecast weather, equipment malfunction or air traffic delay.).
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CAAP 48-01 – 4.5.7

4.5.7 Extensions due to unforeseen operational circumstances

4.5.7.1 For all operations (excluding Appendix 5 or 5A, and in some circumstances Appendix 4B of CAO 48.1), extensions beyond FDP limits may only be made in unforeseen operational circumstances and should not be made on a regular basis. The intention behind the use of the term 'unforeseen circumstances' is to prevent operators continually rostering flight and duty times to their maximum limits and regularly relying on extensions to achieve their operational goals. As well as operational experience, hazard identification and risk assessments can be utilised to foresee potential disruptions or delays, for example:

- weather patterns
- air traffic control instructions
- peak traffic during departure/landing times
- sickness of crew members during a duty.

4.5.7.2 The options available for extension depend on whether the unforeseen operational circumstances arise prior to or during the last planned sector. Where circumstances arise prior to the last planned sector, the opportunity exists to change crew or cancel the flight and avoid the fatigue risk. Following commencement of the final sector, the pilot in command should consider the relative risks of unplanned diversion or increased fatigue due to the extension.

CAO 48.1 Plain English Guide – Page 16

Unforeseen operational circumstances means an unplanned exceptional event that becomes evident after the commencement of the FDP, such as unforecast weather, equipment malfunction or air traffic delay.

To extend an FDP, the FCM must have already commenced the FDP, and then circumstances must arise that are both unplanned and exceptional. For example, encountering fog at a place that regularly has fog could not be used as the basis to extend an FDP, as it could not be considered an 'exceptional event'.