TRANSPORT CANADA GROUNDS BUFFALO AIRWAYS

News / Airlines

Transport Canada (TC) says it has suspended the Air Operators Certificate (AOC) of Buffalo Aurways (J4, Yellowknife) with effect from November 30 citing the airline's poor safety record.

"Transport Canada takes its aviation safety oversight role very seriously and expects every air operator to fully comply with aviation safety regulations," the regulatory body said. "When air operators, like Buffalo Airways, fail to comply with aviation regulations, the department takes appropriate action in the interest of public safety."

The airline will only be allowed to resume operations once it has demonstrated compliance with Part 703 (Air Taxi) and Part 705 (Airline) Canadian Aviation Regulations TC added.

For its part, Buffalo Airways has said it will charter aircraft from other operators to fulfil existing

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contracts affected by the grounding.

Founded in 1970, the iconic Canadian airline operated a fleet of Lockheed Electra(F)s, DC-3s, DC-4s, Curtiss C-46s, and various light aircraft on chartered freight and passenger flights throughout the Northwest Territories and beyond. It also ran scheduled passenger flights between Yellowknife and Hay River.

A TC investigation into Buffalo Airways' operations following the crash-landing of one of its ten DC-3Cs (C-GWIR (cn 9371)) last year said the two parties had a fraught relationship adding that the airline did only the bare minimum needed to comply with regulations.

"The company's response to deficiencies identified during TC surveillance activities demonstrated an adversarial relationship between the company and the regulator," TC said in its report. "The company refuted the regulatory basis of findings, questioned the competence of TC inspectors, and initially did not take responsibility for the issues identified. The overall picture that emerged from this investigation is of an organization that met the basic requirements of regulations and then only when pushed by the regulator."

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