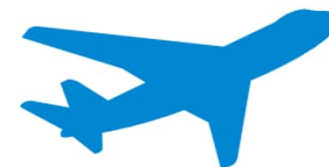




## SESSION II

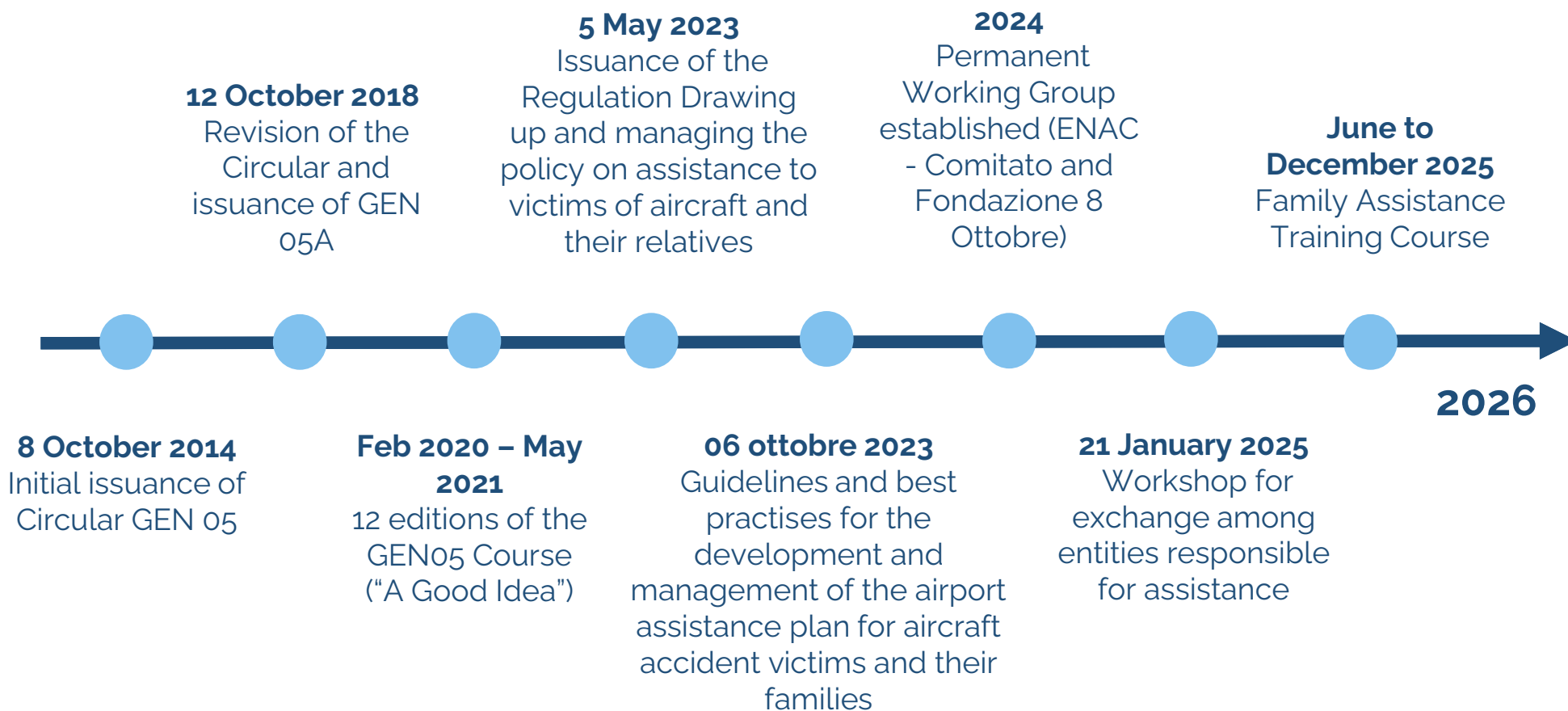
# “DEVELOPING FAMILY ASSISTANCE PLANS THAT REALLY WORK”

Fabiola Cardea





## TIMELINE SINCE 2014





# LAWS, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF AIR ACCIDENT AND THEIR FAMILIES IN ITALY

## The Family Assistance Regulation

outlines the minimum elements necessary for the **effective management** of families of air crash victims.

These elements include defining **roles** and **skills**, emphasizing the need for training personnel involved, highlighting the importance of conducting simulations to enhance awareness, and specifying sanctions for any violations of the **Regulation**.

## The Family Assistance Guidelines and Best Practices

designed as an operational tool (rather than being as prescriptive as the Regulation), it supports all air transport stakeholders in developing effective plans and programs to assist air crash victims.

This document is the outcome of a collaborative effort involving ENAC's internal staff, the **Comitato 8 Ottobre**, and a crisis communication specialist.





## FAMILY ASSISTANCE REGULATION



### Why was it created?

The occurrence of an air accident involving victims determines the need for an intervention aimed both at the immediate rescue and recovery of the deceased and, at subsequent stages, at providing appropriate and specialized assistance to those involved in the event and their families.

**When?** May 2023

The new Regulation on family assistance outlines the necessity for immediate intervention following an air accident to aid survivors and the deceased's relatives, in line with **ICAO** and the **European Union** mandates. Each member state is required to establish national plans to support air accident victims and their families.

It emphasizes the critical need for specialized support for individuals affected by air accidents and their families. It mandates the creation of an **assistance plan for air accident victims**, integrating these plans into the **Airport Emergency Plan** for airport operators and into the **Emergency Response Plan (ERP)** for carriers with an operating license issued in Italy.





# FAMILY ASSISTANCE REGULATION

## ROLE AND COMPETENCIES

**The most innovative part is the definition of roles and competencies:** it details the responsibilities of various stakeholders including **ENAC** (the National Civil Aviation Authority), air carriers, airport managers, airport contact teams, law enforcement, and third parties.

Each entity's responsibilities are outlined, from the drafting of assistance plans to their activation and management in the event of an air accident, and to plan training and exercise to ensure preparedness and effective response.



## GOALS

The Regulation aims to address incidents occurring within national territory or involving Italian-registered air carriers. It also covers assistance to families of Italian passengers aboard foreign aircraft involved in accidents within or destined for Italy.

**It provides key definitions related to air accidents, including the criteria for an incident, roles of various entities involved, and the types of assistance expected.**





# GUIDELINES FAMILY ASSISTANCE AND BEST PRACTICES

**What?** It is a comprehensive Guidelines issued by the **ENAC**, alongside the collaboration of the "**Comitato e Fondazione 8 ottobre**" and **TT&A**, aimed at aiding airport operators in developing and managing plans for providing assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families.

**When?** October 2023

**What are they for?** These Guidelines serve as a non-prescriptive tool to facilitate the creation and administration of such plans, fostering a culture of conscious and appropriate support.



Intended for airport operators, the guidelines aim to complement the ENAC "**Regulation on assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families**", by offering general elements, interpretative criteria, and best practices for planning and managing airport assistance plans for accident victims and their families. All mainly involved parties – ENAC, air carrier, airport operator, other institutional entities, ground handler service providers, no-profit associations and third-party personnel selected for providing psycho-social support – are called to actively collaborate and engage in an ongoing **planning** and **preparation** process. This includes creating, maintaining, updating the plan, preparing through drills, and reviewing the plan for validations or revision based on exercises or actual events.





# PLANNING PREPARATIONS AND RESPONSE

The Guidelines outline the **response** to an air accident in four main phases:

**1) Immediate response** (up to 4 hours). In this timeframe, the activities of the airport response system concern activating, setting up and staffing assistance and reception rooms defined as follows: Passengers assistance room; Families reception room; Crew assistance room; Crew families reception room; Reunification area.

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**2) Short-term response** (from 4 to 12 hours). During this timeframe, the Contact Team should continue to conduct briefings at regular intervals; Personnel in charge of the rooms will also keep collecting useful data and information and receiving those arriving; The air carrier will have activated its own plan and mobilized its resources.



**3) Extended response** (from 12 to 24 hours). During this timeframe the air carrier involved will have established and started, with its own staff, the operations of its Family Assistance Centre, where families and friends will be taken. The activated rooms will be closed and returned to their original function.

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**4) Medium long term response.** A new recovery phase will begin. During this timeframe (1 day - 2 weeks) airport operations will return to full normality and the involved local staff will get back to their usual duties. In this phase, the plan should provide a specific defusing activity and, if applicable, psychological support so as to prevent any risk of secondary victimisation.





# GUIDELINES FAMILY ASSISTANCE AND BEST PRACTICES

## Communication

Following an air accident, airport staff will be called upon to assist families and survivors.

A coordinated program of assistance to families focuses on both the processes required to effectively assist them and on methods, strategies and skills for an effective **communication** with family members and survivors. The first step for an effective communication is to understand what information will be necessary. Special attention is given to **communication** strategies with family members, victims, the Airport Contact Team, and through call centers. The importance of providing accurate, timely, and compassionate information is underscored.



## Training

Assistance to victims and their families is a complex and very psycho-emotionally engaging activity. Therefore, a multilevel and structured approach of raising awareness on the topic is required. This includes adopting a psychosocial perspective for all operators potentially involved, integrating technical and procedural skills with attention to emotional and relational aspects in an emergency situation. The guidelines stress the importance of selecting and properly **training** staff involved in providing assistance, covering general aspects of training, and specifics for different roles such as Contact Team, personnel in charge of rooms, Airport Security staff, law enforcement, and third parties.





# GUIDELINES FAMILY ASSISTANCE AND BEST PRACTICES

## Exercises and drills

**Exercises** mean those activities aimed at training specific competencies or procedures through a well-structured short-term and regularly performed activity with specific purposes;

**Drills** are aimed at verifying effectiveness of the performed training, evaluating current operational procedures, increasing stakeholders' knowledge of procedures in emergency situations, enabling them to verify ways of interaction with the other stakeholders in case of emergency in order to simplify operations.

Recommendations for planning, conducting, and evaluating **exercises** and **drills** are provided to ensure readiness and effectiveness of the assistance plan.

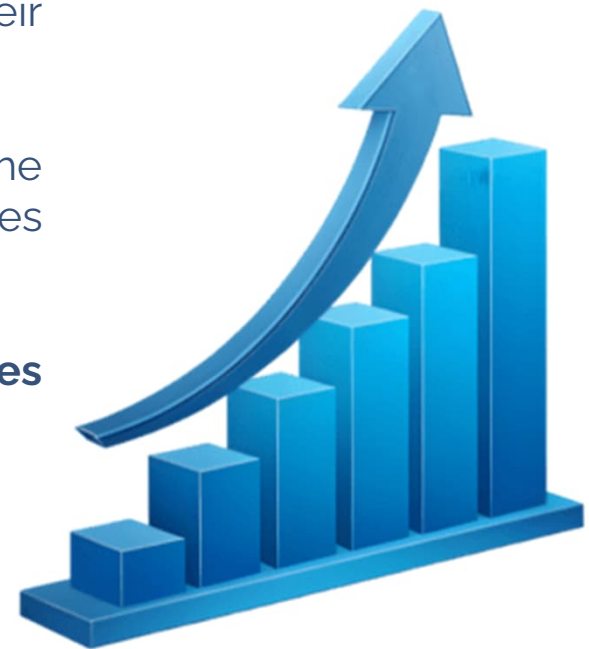
It suggests a gradual approach starting from specific activities up to **complex simulations** involving all elements of the plan.





## ENAC'S COMMITMENT: THE PERMANENT WORKING GROUP

- Develop and implement a specialized **training programme** for the various stakeholders and operators involved in providing assistance to victims of aviation accidents and their families;
- Participation in international and national **working groups, forum, training** and outreach **activities** for the development of best practices pertaining to emergency management in the event of an aviation incident and assistance to the individuals involved.
- Develop and implement a **national operational plan**;
- Maintain and enhance the **Regulations**, together with their **Guidelines and Best Practices**;
- Develop a **quality control programme** and an **audit plan** for the various emergency and assistance plans of the entities responsible for their development;
- Ensure the participation at the **International Assemblies** dedicated to relevant topics (FALP, AAVF, ECAC, etc.)





## ENAC'S COMMITMENT: THE PERMANENT WORKING GROUP

- Support and assistance in the **development of Assistance Plans**, including the subsequent approval process;
- Participate, as **observers**, in the Airport assistance plan exercises;
- The Group's activities are not intended **for evaluation purposes**;
- They are strategically focused on continuous **improvement** and on the dissemination of **best practices** among potentially involved stakeholders.
- Support for designated entities in the **formulation** of agreements and/or protocols with third-party organizations for the provision of psychosocial assistance in the event of an aviation incident (e.g. associations of emergency psychologists, Italian Red Cross (CRI), Civil Protection).

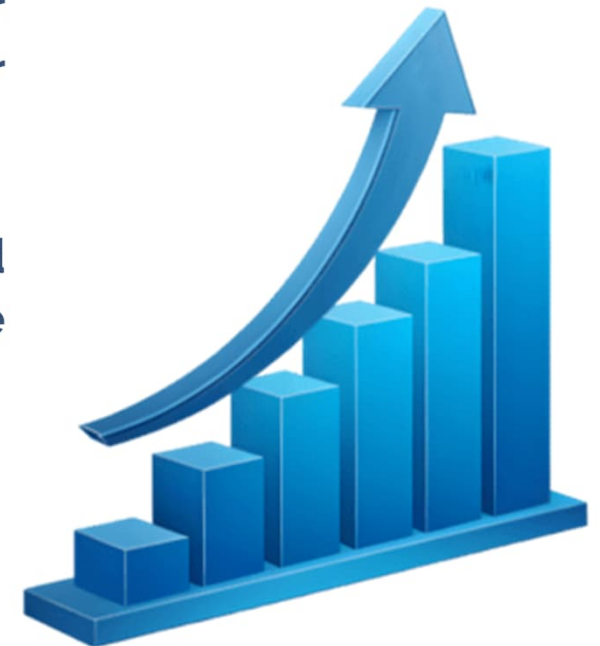




## PERMANENT WORKING GROUP - FAMILY ASSISTANCE PLANS ANALYSIS

The Permanent Working Group has conducted a thorough review of all submitted Family Assistance Plans (FAP):

- A methodological analysis of the received **FAPs** revealed that approximately **50%** have already been **aligned with the Regulation and Guidelines for Assistance to Victims of Air Accidents and their Families**;
- This figure is steadily increasing, **and it is expected that by the end of 2026, all the Family Assistance Plans will be fully updated.**





## KEY AREAS OF ATTENTION IDENTIFIED

During the review of the Assistance Plans, the following issues were identified:

- The need to enhance **checklists** for setting up dedicated rooms has been identified
- Provide more detailed references to **training** exercises and **simulation** activities;
- Add more detailed guidance on emergency response phases and their management;
- Clarify **call-handling** protocols;
- Provide clear guidance on **social media** use and **public engagement** during emergencies
- **Emphasize behavioral aspects** in emergency situations;
- Ensure **tailored** Assistance Plans reflect each airport's **context**.





# THE “FAMILY ASSISTANCE” TRAINING COURSE

## Objectives

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the **Regulation**, the **Guidelines**, and the assigned roles and responsibilities;
- Acquire and enhance the competencies required for the respective responsibilities related to **event response**;
- Develop **foundational knowledge** and **skills** to provide initial assistance to victims and their families;
- Acquire the necessary **knowledge** and develop **proficiency in methodologies** for effective communication in emergency situations.

## Method

Experiential learning approach using **active methodologies, including multimedia materials, testimonials, case studies, and role-playing activities.**

## Target Audience

**All inspection staff who may be assigned to contact teams** (approximately 200 personnel).

## Timeframe

**11 editions** (June-December 2025) –  
**1 additional edition scheduled for February 2026.**





## UPCOMING ACTIONS OF THE PERMANENT GROUP

- **Complete the review** of all the Assistance plans;
- **Send** the observations noted on the updated Plans to the Regulation and Guidelines, **organizing** dedicated **meetings**;
- **Join as observers** in the exercises and simulations on airport assistance plans (briefing/de-briefing);
- **Update all documentation available** on the ENAC Internet and Intranet platforms;
- Update of the **informational brochure** on Rights in case of an air accident;





## EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS

- To promptly **receive** the missing or outdated assistance plans;
- To receive, with appropriate advance notice, the schedule for the **exercises** and **simulations** pertaining to the assistance plans;
- **Sharing** and **discussing** experiences and thoughts on promoting a culture of support for victims as a key part of safety culture.





## WORK IN PROGRESS – 2026

### Guidelines Update

- Revise the **guidelines** to incorporate lessons learned and acquired experience;
- **Integrate improvement proposals** from activities conducted so far.

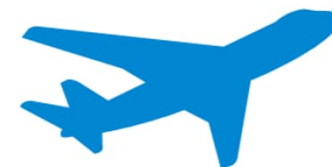
### Airport Management Workshop

- **Collaborate with airport management** by sharing best practices through interactive discussions;
- Evaluate **innovative proposals** and **integrate new feedback**;
- Provide a tool to generate **innovative solutions** and gain **operational insights**.





***THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION***



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