Department of the Air Force, DoD

§ 861.4 DOD air transportation quality and safety requirements.

(a) General. The DOD, as a customer of air transportation and operational support services, expects air carriers used by DOD to employ programs and business practices that not only ensure good service but also enhance the safety, operational, and maintenance standards established by applicable Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regulations. Accordingly, and as required by the references in §861.1 (a) and (b), the DOD has established a set of quality and safety criteria and requirements that reflect the type programs and practices DOD seeks from air carriers providing services to DOD. Air carriers must meet and maintain these requirements in order to be eligible for DOD business. Air carriers providing air transportation services to DOD either directly by contract or agreement, or indirectly through the General Services Administration (GSA) City Pair Program or some other arrangement, must be approved by DOD prior to providing such services and remain in an approved status throughout the contract, agreement, or arrangement performance period. This approval entails successful completion of initial and recurring on-site surveys as well as periodic performance evaluations in accordance with the reference in §861.1(b). The quality and safety criteria and requirements set forth in this part complement rather than replace the CAA criteria applicable to air carriers. Air carriers normally remain fully subject to applicable CAA regulations (CARs) while performing business for the DOD, even when the aircraft involved is used exclusively for DOD missions. The inspection and oversight criteria set forth in this part do not, as a general rule, apply to air carriers providing only operational support services to DOD. However, in the event concerns relating to the safety of such a carrier arise, the CARB or higher authority may, on a case-by-case basis, direct an appropriate level of oversight under the authority of this part.

(b) Applicability. (1) The evaluation, quality and safety criteria and requirements set forth in this part apply to air carriers providing or seeking to provide air transportation services to DOD.

(2) Foreign air carriers performing portions of GSA City Pair routes awarded to U.S. air carriers under a code-sharing arrangement, as well as foreign air carriers providing individually-ticketed passenger service to DOD personnel traveling on official business, may be subject to limited oversight and review pursuant to §861.6.

(3) The inspection and oversight requirements, as well as the quality and safety criteria of this part may, on a case-by-case basis and at the discretion of the CARB or higher authority, be applied to air carriers seeking to provide or providing operational support services as defined in §861.3(l).

(4) The inspection and oversight requirements of this part do not apply to aircraft engaged in medical transport services if procured under emergency conditions to save life, limb or eyesight. Likewise, the inspection and oversight requirements of this part are not applicable when DOD is not involved in the procurement of the medical transportation services. For example, when specific medical treatment is obtained on an individual basis by or for DOD personnel with medical transportation provided, as needed, at the direction of the non-DOD medical care giver. This includes situations where DOD, through TRICARE or otherwise, pays for such transportation as part of the costs of medical services provided.

(c) Scope and nature of the evaluation program—(1) Evaluation requirement.
The provision of air transportation services under a contract or agreement with or on behalf of DOD, requires the successful completion of an initial on-site survey and approval by the CARB under this part in order to be eligible for DOD business. In addition, U.S. air carriers awarded contracts under the GSA City Pair Program, including those that perform part of the contract under a code-sharing arrangement with the U.S. air carrier awarded the contract, must successfully complete an initial on-site survey and be approved by the CARB for DOD use under this part prior to beginning performance of the GSA contract. Once approved by DOD, air carriers providing air transportation services are subject to recurring on-site surveys and performance evaluations and assessments throughout the duration of the relevant contract or agreement. The frequency and scope of these surveys and performance reviews will be in accordance with Enclosure 3 of the reference in §861.1(b).

(2) Office of primary responsibility. Evaluations are performed by the DOD Air Carrier Survey and Analysis Office located at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. The mailing address of this office is HQ AMC/DOB, 402 Scott Drive Unit 3A1, Scott AFB IL 62225–5302. The website address is https://public.scott.af.mil/hqamc/DOB/index.htm.

(3) Items considered in the evaluation process. The specifics of the applicable DOD contract or agreement (if any), the applicable CAA regulations, and the experienced judgment of DOD personnel will be used to evaluate an air carrier's capability to perform services for DOD. The survey may also include, with the air carrier’s coordination, observation of cockpit crew performance, as well as ramp inspections of selected company aircraft. In the case of air carriers seeking to provide air transportation services, after satisfactory completion of the initial survey and approval by the CARB as a DOD air carrier, follow-up surveys will be conducted on a recurring basis and when otherwise required to validate adherence to DOD quality and safety requirements. DOD personnel will also assess these quality and safety requirements when conducting periodic air carrier performance evaluations. The size of an air carrier, along with the type and scope of operations will be considered during the on-site survey. For example, while an air taxi operator may not have a formal flight control function, such as a 24-hour dispatch organization, that same air taxi operator is expected to demonstrate some type of effective flight following capability. On the other hand, a major air carrier is expected to have a formal flight control or dispatch function. Both, however, will be evaluated based on the effectiveness and quality of whatever flight following function they do maintain. In the case of air carriers seeking to provide operational support services, the type, scope and frequency of evaluation, if any, performed by DOD or other entity will be as directed by the CARB or higher authority.

(d) Status of aircraft performing services for DOD. All air carriers providing air transportation or operational support services to the DOD shall have FAA or CAA air carrier or commercial operator certificates and shall remain under FAA and/or CAA regulatory and safety oversight during performance of the DOD mission. Aircraft performing services for or on behalf of DOD shall be on the air carrier’s operating certificate, and remain on that certificate while performing the DOD mission. The installation of any special equipment needed to perform services for DOD shall be FAA or CAA approved or an appropriate FAA or CAA waiver obtained.

(e) Evaluation requirements. The air carrier requirements stated in this part provide the criteria against which would-be DOD and GSA City Pair Program air carrier contractors, as well as air carriers providing services on behalf of DOD, may be subjectively evaluated by DOD. These requirements are neither all-inclusive nor inflexible in nature. They are not replacements for the certification criteria and other regulations established by the CAA. Rather, these requirements complement CAA certification criteria and regulations and describe the enhanced level of service required by DOD. The relative weight accorded these requirements in a given case, as well as the determination of whether an air carrier meets or exceeds them, is a matter
within the sole discretion of the DOD Air Carrier Survey and Analysis Office and the CARB, subject to the statutory minimums provided in the reference in §861.1(a).

(1) **Quality and safety requirements—prior experience.** U.S. and foreign air carriers applying for DOD approval in order to conduct air transportation services for or on behalf of DOD under a contract or agreement with DOD, the GSA City Pair Program, or by some other arrangement are required to possess 12 months of continuous service equivalent to the service sought by DOD. In applying this requirement, the following guidance will be used by DOD authorities:

(i) “12 months” refers to the 12 calendar months immediately preceding the request for DOD approval.

(ii) “Continuous” service means the carrier must have performed revenue-generating services of the nature for which DOD approval is sought, as an FAA part 121, 125, 127, or 135 (14 CFR 121, 125, 127, or 135) air carrier (or foreign CAA equivalent if appropriate) on a recurring, substantially uninterrupted basis. The services must have occurred with such frequency and regularity as to clearly demonstrate the carrier’s ability to perform and support sustained, safe, reliable, and regular services of the type DOD is seeking. Weekly flight activity is normally considered continuous, while sporadic or seasonal operations (if such operations are the only operations conducted by the carrier) may not suffice to establish a carrier’s ability to perform and support services in the sustained, safe, reliable, and regular manner required by DOD. The ability of a carrier to perform services of the type sought by DOD may be called into question if there have been lengthy periods of time during the qualifying period in which the carrier has not operated such services. Consequently, any cessation, or nonperformance of the type of service for which approval is sought may, if it exceeds 30 days in length during the qualifying period and depending on the underlying factual circumstances, necessitate “restarting” the 12-month continuous service period needed to obtain DOD approval.

(iii) “Equivalent to the services sought by DOD” means service offered to qualify for DOD approval must be substantially equivalent to the type of service sought by DOD. The prior experience must be equivalent in difficulty and complexity with regard to the distances flown, weather systems encountered, international and national procedures, the same or similar aircraft, schedule demands, aircrew experience, number of passengers handled, frequency of operations, and management required. There is not a set formula for determining whether a particular type of service qualifies. The performance of cargo services is not considered to be “substantially equivalent” to the performance of passenger services, and may not be used to meet the 12 continuous months requirement for passenger services. However, when a carrier already providing cargo services to DOD applies to carry passengers, the CARB may consider the carrier’s cargo performance and experience in assessing whether a carrier is qualified to carry passengers on a specific type or category of aircraft, over certain routes or stage lengths, or under differing air traffic control, weather, or other conditions. The following examples are illustrative and not intended to reflect or predict CARB action in any given case:

**Example 1:** Coyote Air has operated commercial passenger commuter operations in the United States for a number of years flying a variety of twin-engine turboprop aircraft. They have also been a DOD-approved cargo carrier, providing international cargo services using DC-10 freighter aircraft. Coyote Air purchases a passenger version DC-10, and seeks DOD approval to provide international passenger service for DOD. The CARB may decide that although Coyote Air has provided passenger services for 12 continuous months, those services are not substantially equivalent to those being sought by DOD. While the carrier may have considerable operational experience with the DC-10, its commuter passenger operations are not substantially equivalent to the service now proposed—international passenger services on large jet aircraft.

**Example 2:** Acme Air has been a DOD-approved cargo carrier for several years, operating domestic and international missions with MD-11 freighter aircraft. At the same time, Acme has been performing commercial international passenger services with B-757 aircraft.
aircraft. Acme Air purchases a MD-11 passenger aircraft and applies to perform passenger services for DOD using the MD-11. Assuming Acme has performed B-757 passenger service for 12 continuous months immediately preceding its application, the CARB may consider these passenger services substantially equivalent to those proposed since both involve the operation of large multi-engine aircraft in an international environment. The CARB may also consider Acme’s operational history with its MD-11 freighter aircraft in determining whether the carrier is competent to provide MD-11 passenger service in the same environment.

(iv) Once approved by DOD, an air carrier’s failure to maintain continuous operations of the type for which approval has been granted may, at the discretion of the CARB, be grounds for nonuse or suspension under this part, rendering the carrier ineligible for DOD business during the nonuse or suspension period. Any cessation or non-performance of the type of service for which approval has been obtained may, if it exceeds 30 days in length and depending on the circumstances, provide the basis for the CARB to take appropriate action.

(2) Quality and safety requirements—air carrier management. Management has clearly defined safety as the number one company priority, and safety is never sacrificed to satisfy passenger concern, convenience, or cost. Policies, procedures, and goals that enhance the CAA’s minimum operations and maintenance standards have been established and implemented. A cooperative response to CAA inspections, critiques, or comments is demonstrated. Proper support infrastructure, including facilities, equipment, parts, and qualified personnel, is provided at the certificate holder’s primary facility and en route stations. Personnel with aviation credentials and experience fill key management positions. An internal quality audit program or other method capable of identifying in-house deficiencies and measuring the company’s compliance with their stated policies and standards has been implemented. Audit results are analyzed in order to determine the cause, not just the symptom, of any deficiency. The result of sound fiscal policy is evident throughout the company. Foreign code-sharing air carrier partners are audited at least every two years using DOD-approved criteria and any findings resolved. Comprehensive disaster response plans and, where applicable, family support plans, must be in place and exercised on a regular basis.

(3) Quality and safety requirements—operations—(i) Flight safety. Established policies that promote flight safety. These policies are infused among all aircrew and operational personnel who translate the policies into practice. New or revised safety-related data are promptly disseminated to affected personnel who understand that deviation from any established safety policy is unacceptable. An audit system that detects unsafe practices is in place and a feedback structure informs management of safety policy results including possible safety problems. Management ensures that corrective actions resolve every unsafe condition.

(ii) Flight operations. Established flight operations policies and procedures are up-to-date, reflect the current scope of operations, and are clearly defined to aviation department employees. These adhered-to procedures are further supported by a flow of current, management-generated safety and operational communications. Managers are in touch with mission requirements, supervise crew selection, and ensure the risk associated with all flight operations is reduced to the lowest acceptable level. Flight crews are free from undue management pressure and are comfortable with exercising their professional judgment during flight activities, even if such actions do not support the flight schedule. Effective lines of communication permit feedback from line crews to operations managers. Personnel records are maintained and reflect such data as experience, qualifications, and medical status.

(iii) Flight crew hiring. Established procedures ensure that applicants are carefully screened, including a review of the individual’s health and suitability to perform flight crew duties. Consideration is given to the applicant’s total aviation background, appropriate experience, and the individual’s potential to perform safely. Freedom from alcohol abuse and illegal drugs is required. If new-hire cockpit
crewmembers do not meet industry standards for experience and qualification, then increased training and management attention to properly qualify these personnel are required.

(iv) Aircrew training. Training, including recurrent training, which develops and refines skills designed to eliminate mishaps and improve safety, is essential to a quality operation. Crew coordination training that facilitates full cockpit crews training and full crew interaction using standardized procedures and including the principles of Crew Resource Management (CRM) is required. Programs involving the use of simulators or other devices that can provide realistic training scenarios are desired. Captain and First Officer training objectives cultivate similar levels of proficiency. Appropriate emergency procedures training (e.g., evacuation procedures) is provided to flight deck and flight attendant personnel as a total crew whenever possible; such training focuses on cockpit and cabin crews functioning as a coordinated team during emergencies. Crew training—be it pilot, engineer, or flight attendant—is appropriate to the level of risk and circumstances anticipated for the trainee. Training programs have the flexibility to incorporate and resolve recurring problem areas associated with day-to-day flight operations. Aeromedical crews must also be trained in handling the specific needs of the categories of patients normally accepted for transportation on the equipment to be used. Trainers are highly skilled in both subject matter and training techniques. Training received is documented, and that documentation is maintained in a current status.

(v) Captain upgrade training. A selection and training process that considers proven experience, decision making, crew resource management, and response to unusual situations, including stress and pressure, is required. Also important is emphasis on captain responsibility and authority.

(vi) Aircrew scheduling. A closely monitored system that evaluates operational risks, experience levels of crewmembers, and ensures the proper pairing of aircrews on all flights is required. New captains are scheduled with highly experienced first officers, and new or low-time first officers are scheduled with experienced captains. Except for aircraft new to the company, captains and first officers assigned to DOD charter passenger missions possess at least 250 hours combined experience in the type aircraft being operated. The scheduling system involves an established flight duty time program for aircrews, including flight attendants, carefully managed so as to ensure proper crew rest and considers quality-of-life factors. Attention is given to the stress on aircrews during strikes, mergers, or periods of labor-management difficulties.

(vii) In-flight performance. Aircrews, including flight attendants and flight medical personnel, are fit for flight duties and trained to handle normal, abnormal, and emergency situations. They demonstrate crew discipline and a knowledge of aviation rules; use company-developed standardized procedures; adhere to checklists; and emphasize safety, including security considerations, throughout all preflight, in-flight, and postflight operations. Qualified company personnel evaluate aircrews and analyze results; known performance deficiencies are eliminated. Evaluations ensure aircrews demonstrate aircraft proficiency in accordance with company established standards. Flight crews are able to determine an aircraft’s maintenance condition prior to flight and use standardized methods to accurately report aircraft deficiencies to the maintenance activity.

(viii) Operational control/support. Effective mission control includes communications with aircrews and the capability to respond to irregularities or difficulties. Clear written procedures for mission preparation and flight following aircraft and aircrews are provided. There is access to weather, flight planning, and aircraft maintenance data. There are personnel available who are knowledgeable in aircraft performance and mission requirements and that can correctly respond to emergency situations. There is close interface between operations and maintenance, ensuring a mutual awareness of aircraft operational and maintenance status. Procedures to notify
§ 861.4  DOD in case of an accident or serious incident have been established. Flight crews involved in such accidents or incidents report the situation to company personnel who, in turn, have procedures to evaluate the flight crew’s capability to continue the mission. Aircraft involved in accidents or incidents are inspected in accordance with Civil Aviation Regulations and a determination made as to whether or not the aircraft is safe for continued operations.

(ix) DOD charter procedures. Detailed procedures addressing military charter requirements are expected. The level of risk associated with DOD charter missions does not exceed the risks inherent in the carrier’s non-DOD daily flight operations. Complete route planning and airport analyses are accomplished, and actual passenger and cargo weights are used in computing aircraft weight and balance.

(4) Quality and safety requirements—maintenance. Maintenance supervisors ensure all personnel understand that in spite of scheduling pressure, peer pressure, supervisory pressure, or other factors, the airplane must be airworthy prior to flight. Passenger and employee safety is a paramount management concern. Quality, completeness, and integrity of work are trademarks of the maintenance manager and maintenance department. Nonconformance to established maintenance practices is not tolerated. Management ensures that contracted maintenance, including repair and overhaul facilities, is performed by maintenance organizations acceptable to the CAA.

(i) Maintenance personnel. Air carriers are expected to hire and train the number of employees required to safely maintain the company aircraft and support the scope of the maintenance operations both at home station (the company’s primary facility) and at en route locations. These personnel ensure that all maintenance tasks, including required inspections and airworthiness directives, are performed; that maintenance actions are properly documented; and that the discrepancies identified between inspections are corrected. Mechanics are fit for duty, properly certificated, the company verifies certification, and these personnel possess the knowledge and the necessary aircraft-specific experience to accomplish the maintenance tasks. Noncertified and inexperienced personnel received proper supervision. Freedom from alcohol abuse and illegal drugs is required.

(ii) Quality assurance. A system that continuously analyzes the performance and effectiveness of maintenance activities and maintenance inspection programs is required. This system evaluates such functions as reliability reports, audits, component tear-down reports, inspection procedures and results, tool calibration program, real-time aircraft maintenance actions, warranty programs, and other maintenance functions. The extent of this program is directly related to the air carrier’s size and scope of operation. The cause of any recurring discrepancy or negative trend is researched and eliminated. Action is taken to prevent recurrence of these discrepancies and preventive actions are monitored to ensure effectiveness. The results of preventive actions are provided to appropriate maintenance technicians.

(iii) Maintenance inspection activity. A process to ensure required aircraft inspections are completed and the results properly documented is required. Also required is a system to evaluate contract vendors, suppliers, and their products. Inspection personnel are identified, trained (initial and recurrent), and provided guidance regarding inspector responsibility and authority. The inspection activity is normally a separate entity within the maintenance department.

(iv) Maintenance training. Training is conducted commensurate with the size and type of maintenance function being performed. Continuing education and progressive experience are provided for all maintenance personnel. Orientation, familiarization, on-the-job, and appropriate recurrent training for all full and part-time personnel are expected. The use of such training aids as mockups, simulators, and computer-based training enhances maintenance training efforts and is desired. Training documentation is required; it is current, complete, well maintained, and
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correctly identifies any special authorization such as inspection and airworthiness release. Trainers are fully qualified in the subject manner.

(v) Maintenance control. A method to control maintenance activities and track aircraft status is required. Qualified personnel monitor maintenance preplanning, ensure completion of maintenance actions, and track deferred discrepancies. Deferred maintenance actions are identified to supervisory personnel and corrected in accordance with the criteria provided by the manufacturer or regulatory agency. Constant and effective communications between maintenance and flight operations ensure an exchange of critical information.

(vi) Aircraft maintenance program. Aircraft are properly certified and maintained in a manner that ensures they are airworthy and safe. The program includes the use of manufacturer’s and CAA information, as well as company policies and procedures. Airworthiness directives are complied with in the prescribed time frame, and service bulletins are evaluated for applicable action. Approved reliability programs are proactive, providing management with visibly on the effectiveness of the maintenance program; attention is given to initial component and older aircraft inspection intervals and to deferred maintenance actions. Special tools and equipment are calibrated.

(vii) Maintenance records. Maintenance actions are well documented and provide a complete record of maintenance accomplished and, for repetitive actions, maintenance required. Such records as aircraft log books and maintenance documentation are legible, dated, clean, readily identifiable, and maintained in an orderly fashion. Inspection compliance, airworthiness release, and maintenance release records, etc., are completed and signed by approved personnel.

(viii) Aircraft appearance. Aircraft exteriors, including all visible surfaces and components, are clean and well maintained. Interiors are also clean and orderly. Required safety equipment and systems are available and operable.

(ix) Fueling and servicing. Aircraft fuel is free from contamination, and company fuel facilities (farms) are inspected and results documented. Procedures and instructions pertaining to servicing, handling, and storing fuel and oil meet established safety standards. Procedures for monitoring and verifying vendor servicing practices are included in this program.

(x) Maintenance manuals. Company policy manuals and manufacturer’s maintenance manuals are current, available, clear, complete, and adhered to by maintenance personnel. These manuals provide maintenance personnel with standardized procedures for maintaining company aircraft. Management policies, lines of authority, and company maintenance procedures are documented in company manuals and kept in a current status.

(xi) Maintenance facilities. Well maintained, clean maintenance facilities, adequate for the level of aircraft repair authorized in the company’s CAA certificate are expected. Safety equipment is available in hangars, shops, etc., and is serviceable. Shipping, receiving, and stores areas are likewise clean and orderly. Parts are correctly packaged, tagged, segregated, and shelf life properly monitored.

(5) Quality and safety requirements—security. Company personnel receive training in security responsibilities and practice applicable procedures during ground and in-flight operations. Compliance with provisions of the appropriate standard security program, established by the Transportation Security Administration or foreign equivalent, is required for all DOD missions.

(6) Quality and safety requirements—specific equipment requirements. Air carriers satisfy DOD equipment and other requirements as specified in DOD agreements.

(7) Quality and safety requirements—oversight of commuter or foreign air carriers in code-sharing agreements. Air carriers awarded a route under the Passenger Standing Route Order (PSRO) program, the GSA City Pair Program, or other DOD program, that includes performance of a portion of the route by a commuter or foreign air carrier with which it has a code-sharing arrangement, must have a formal procedure in place to periodically review and assess the code-sharing air carrier’s safety, operations, and maintenance
programs. The extent of such reviews and assessments must be consistent with, and related to, the code-sharing air carrier's safety history. These procedures must also provide for actual inspections of the foreign code-sharing air carrier if the above reviews and assessments indicate questionable safety practices.

(8) Quality and safety requirements—
aeromedical transport requirements. (i) The degree of oversight is as determined by the CARB or higher authority. When an inspection is conducted, DOD medical personnel may also participate to assess the ability to provide the patient care and any specialty care required by DOD. The CARB’s review will be limited solely to issues related to flight safety.

(ii) Portable Electronic Devices (PEDs) used in the provision of medical services or treatment on board aircraft are tested for non-interference with aircraft systems and the results documented to show compliance with 14 CFR 91.21 or other applicable CAA regulations. If there are no CAA regulations, actual use/inflight testing of the same or similar model PED prior to use with DOD patients is the minimum requirement.

§ 861.5 DOD Commercial Airlift Review Board procedures.

(a) This section establishes procedures to be used by the DOD when, in accordance with references in §861.1(a) and (b):

(1) An air carrier is subject to review or other action by the DOD Commercial Airlift Review Board, or CARB;

(2) A warning, suspension, temporary nonuse, or reinstatement action is considered or taken against a carrier by the CARB; or

(3) An issue involving an air carrier is referred by the CARB to higher authority for appropriate action.

(b) These procedures apply to air carriers seeking or already providing air transportation services to DOD. It also applies to U.S. or foreign air carriers providing operational support services to DOD which, on a case-by-case basis and at the discretion of the CARB or higher authority, require some level of oversight by DOD.

(c) An air carrier’s sole remedy in the case of a suspension decision by the CARB is the appellate process under this part.

(d) Quality and safety issues relating to air carriers used, or proposing to be used, by DOD, per reference (b) must be referred to the CARB for appropriate disposition.

(e) CARB responsibilities. As detailed in the reference in §861.1(b), the CARB provides a multifunctional review of the efforts of the DOD Air Carrier Survey and Analysis Office and is the first level decision authority in DOD on quality and safety issues relating to air carriers. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to: the review and approval or disapproval of air carriers seeking initial approval to provide air transportation service to DOD; the review and approval or disapproval of air carriers in the program that do not meet DOD quality and safety requirements; the review and approval or disapproval of air carriers in the program seeking to provide a class of service different from that which they are currently approved; taking action to suspend, reinstate, or place into temporary nonuse or extended temporary nonuse, DOD approved carriers; taking action, on an as needed basis, to review, suspend, reinstate, or place into temporary nonuse or extended temporary nonuse, an air carrier providing operational support services to DOD; and, referring with recommendations, issues requiring resolution or other action by higher authority.

(1) CARB administrative procedures—(1) Membership. The CARB will consist of four voting members appointed by USCINCTRANS from USTRANSCOM and its component commands. These members and their alternates will be general officers or their civilian equivalent, with experience in the operations, maintenance, transportation, or air safety fields. A Chairman and alternate will be designated. Nonvoting CARB members will be appointed as necessary by USCINCTRANS. A nonvoting recorder will also be appointed.

(2) Decisions. Decisions of the CARB will be taken by a majority vote of the voting members present, with a minimum of three voting members (or their alternates) required to constitute