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MAS to ensure staff get counselling when helping in disaster

Perkama volunteers and experts would assist in detecting any stress-related symptoms among airline team members. -The Star/ANN

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SUBANG JAYA, Malaysia - Malaysia Airlines has embarked on an initiative to ensure that its staff get emotional support and counselling when they are called to assist in any air crisis or disaster.

It has inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Malaysian International Counselling Association (Perkama), which would provide mental health support and counselling to MAS staff who volunteer to help in such disasters.

MAS head of operations Capt Mohamed Azharuddin and Perkama president Tan Sri Dr Nordin Kardi signed the MoU for Emergency Response Support Services yesterday.

"As human beings, there are some who are emotionally and spiritually strong and there are others who (would be) easily traumatised after assisting in any air disaster," Azharuddin said during the ceremony.

"This tie up will certainly help our staff in such situations," he added.

Azharuddin also explained that the airline would be better prepared to provide counselling and emotional support to its customers and their relatives during such situations.

Dr Nordin said his association would like to assure MAS that Perkama would provide its best to materialise this venture for the sake of the nation's aviation industry.

"We have since planned for continuous training in trauma management and counselling skills for all volunteers involved in this project," he said.

MAS said in a statement that Perkama volunteers and experts would assist in detecting any stress-related symptoms among airline team members and provide appropriate intervention techniques in a timely and effective manner.

According to the airline, the collaboration was yet another initiative to continuously beef up its emergency response readiness, especially in areas where it does not have in-house expertise.

Apart from coordinating recovery support during emergency situations, the MAS crisis management department would also engage Perkama to develop advanced training modules for its humanitarian support services.

The MoU with Perkama is the third agreement MAS has signed with non-governmental organisations, after the Malaysian Amateur Radio Emergency Services and the Tsu Chi Buddhist Foundation Malay-sian Chapter.