European Union Aviation Safety Agency

FAQ n.44670

FAQs:

Part-NCC/NCO, Air Operations, Regulations

Question:

How should I start building my SMS if I have a very small organisation (up to 2-3 persons) and I operate a complex aeroplane or helicopter?

Answer:

A good starting point would be to describe your regular operation, the daily business. The description of your operation will give direction to your organisation's effective SMS and will become its foundation.

This description should simply be a checklist containing the day-to-day activities, as it provides the understanding necessary to identify and manage the risks associated with the operation.

The analysis of your daily operation should consider the following aspects (this list is not exhaustive):

- What is the frequency of your flights?
- What aircraft type(s) do you have in your fleet?
- What are your departure & destination points?
- What is specific to the aerodromes you use?
- Which are the routes on which you fly – more or less the same routes or very different routes?
- Do you carry passengers?
- What type of operation do you perform on those routes? Be as specific as you can.
- Do you have a system that helps you prepare your flight?
- How do you plan and calculate the necessary fuel supply?
- Do you have any specific approvals (e.g., LVO, PBN, etc.)?
- Are your pilots' training and qualifications compliant with the requirements? How about the other employees involved in operation?
- Are the operational procedures and any flight documents current and available to all the personnel involved in operation?
- How do you ensure that the necessary information is communicated to the right persons involved in operation?
- How do you ensure aircraft maintenance?

- What do you do if any of the elements above changes for one reason or another? Are you prepared to cope with that change and minimise its effects in your daily operation? How do you deal with such changes?
- Make sure you include the aspect of disruptive changes in your analysis.
- Have you set up the minimum levels of acceptance to which every key operational activity (e.g. scheduling, planning, flight execution, fuel consumption, training, aircraft maintenance) can go? In other words, have you set up your performance expectations?

The last two questions will lead to the second step in building your SMS:

- What could be the main potential risks associated to each of the elements above – what could go wrong with these daily variables?

Identifying the key elements of risk in this day-to-day operation will help you to spot more easily the strengths and weaknesses in your regular business, the errors, as well as the good practices.

The third step is then to choose/apply adequate mitigation measures to reduce the risks inherent to your daily operation:

- Make a list of solutions to reduce each risk to an acceptable level. Consider to use the Risk register checklist proposed in GM3 ORO.GEN.200(a)(3) for your safety risk management/assessment.

A fourth step is to assess whether the mitigation measures that you have prepared are effective and help you to achieve the required level of safety.

- Keep evidence of any occurrence, identify their cause, and see if they are repetitive and if they have anything in common.
- Find ways to prevent them from reoccurring by addressing the “root cause”.
- Check how well your solutions helped in preventing the reoccurrence of that event.

A fifth step ensures that the whole process becomes cyclic, and that you learn from your previous experience in order to make your operation safer and more efficient.

- Run this check once a year or after an event or change in the aspects mentioned above.

Does this scheme address your needs and help you to have a safe operation?

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Link:

https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/44670