European Union Aviation Safety Agency

FAQ n.19147

FAQs:

ORO.GEN, Part-ORO, Air Operations, Regulations

Question:

Is there a difference between safety risk management (SRM) and SMS?

Answer:

Reference: Regulation (EU) No 965/2012 on Air Operations, ICAO Annex 19

ICAO defines SMS as “a systematic approach to managing safety, including the necessary organisational structures, accountabilities, policies and procedures.”

While SRM is an essential element within a management system for safety, it is not the only element required. To be effective, SRM needs a structured approach and an organisational framework with clearly defined policies, safety responsibilities and accountabilities. Such framework is essential to facilitate and encourage hazard identification, ensure a structured & consistent approach to risk assessment, as well as for allowing informed decisions to be made at the right organisational level, e.g. in relation to risk acceptability or different risk mitigation options. For example, the organisation needs to put in place policies, procedures and mechanisms for internal safety reporting and then maintain the conditions for allowing such reporting to take place.

Also, in order to ensure that the organisation is continually managing its risks it needs to monitor how well it performs, both in terms of effectiveness of risk controls implemented and effective compliance with applicable requirements. This is part of safety assurance, which is another component of an SMS as per ICAO Annex 19.

Additionally the organisation has to train their staff to fulfil their duties, including those related to any safety management task and to properly communicate on any safety relevant issue.

All this should lead to ensuring a systematic approach to SRM and help fostering the necessary ‘culture’ within the organisation to enable careful management and sound understanding of risk, including in day-to-day activities.

In conclusion, SRM, while being a core element of any management system for safety, should not be singled out as the only element required to implement such system.

See also the FAQ on SMS versus management system above.

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