

### Introducing these questions and answers.....

These Event Q&A are provided as a follow up from the EASA Ramp-up Safety Week session for Aerodromes.

## EASA Safety Week - 21 to 24 June 2021



**Could you give us as many examples as possible of occurrences (not only accidents, but it will be probably the easiest option) that are somehow linked to GHSP and had an impact on a/c structure? Any such events during COVID-19 9ones that we can already talk about)?**

Some examples of occurrences that are linked to ground handling and would have a potential impact on the aircraft structure would be collisions between aircraft and all types of ground vehicles and equipment, as well as collisions between aircraft and buildings/structures (for example airbridges), and damage inflicted to the aircraft fuselage during loading/unloading. These issues are addressed in the European Safety Risk Management (SRM) process within safety issues in the aerodromes and ground handling safety risk portfolio, which is published in [Volume III of the European Plan for Aviation Safety \(EPAS\)](#). The link between safety issues identified through occurrence data and unwanted accident outcomes, or key risk areas, are shown in the data portfolio which is published in [Chapter 7 of the EASA Annual Safety Review](#). More detailed analyses will be performed when the associated safety issues are assessed.

**Is there any initiative / project for safety management in terms of AI, big data, machine learning or any other I+D+i project?**

EASA's Data4Safety Project is now moving towards the end of the proof of concept phase and become operational from 2022. For more information take a look at [this video](#) from the SAFE360 event.

**How effective is the training, safety awareness and campaigns for staff returned from long leave? The same for remote audits during the pandemic? Any studies made to gauge the effectiveness?**

These are the main tools available to the industry as staff return to work. The [EASA Covid-19 risk portfolio](#) has specifically focussed towards targetted training to manage skills and knowledge degradation - specific work has been produced by the EASA industry collaborative groups in this area - [available on the Air Ops Community Site](#). It is also very important to monitor the situation on the field closely with inspections and targeted audits. A list of safety critical functions with their respective qualifications is important to allow for a safe restart of operations and to allow for proper training of safety critical post holders.

**Have the number of occurrence reports increased as a result of the drift in safety behaviour? If not in absolute numbers maybe in relative terms?**

See also the 1st question - Feedback from Airports is that no increase in occurrence reports have been observed.

**Do you expect digitisation and automation to increase following the pandemic in order to make up for staff reductions?**

A lot of functions in ground handling cannot be digitized or automated any further. An impact can be expected on meeting culture where a lot of meetings will be able to be held remotely. The actual work on the floor will not be digitized. Digitisation and automation is a trend irrespective of the pandemic. Covid may accelerate the evolution, not necessarily to make up for staff reduction, but to accommodate customer needs.

**Do you think that the identified increase in birdstrike risk resulted purely from reduced ATM rates, or was there a drop in WHM active control provision in response to reduced traffic?**

There has not been a decrease in WHM activities, even on the contrary based on our feedback from industry. We have seen an increased awareness of this topic and in some situations to an increase in wildlife strikes airports have increased the WHM presence on the airport. The [EASA SIB on restart of aerodrome operations](#) focuses on wildlife management and EASA has also developed a [guide to WHM implementation](#).

**Regarding the psychological support offered to staff, did your leadership team need to receive specialised training in that field and, if yes, what did it entail?**

Answer was provided during the webinar by the Airports: No detailed training has been provided, but taking account of the special situation has been included in the training of staff for restart of operations. In some cases, support by HR was obtained when specific needs arose.

From the EASA side - the [Wellbeing Support Hub](#) was set up to provide material for staff and organisations on wellbeing and the psychological side of the Ramp-up.

**Covid has given the chance to operators to review and change/update their procedures. For staff that has been temporarily laid off, this means they come back to an organisation with new procedures. Have these new procedures/changed company processes been identified as a hazard and mitigated by amended initial or recurrent training?**

It is part of our restart of operations information video to raise awareness to train staff on new and changed procedures. It is an important mitigating measure to allow for a safe restart of operations.

Staff are always trained when new procedures come into effect, also when having been absent for longer period of time (which was not the case at all aerodromes).

[EASA SIB Safety Information Bulletin](#) for restart of aerodromes and [Covid-19 risk portfolio focus](#) is on training, staff qualification and competence.

## **Was the increase in GHSP-linked occurrence rates (SPIs) visible during the COVID-19?**

Linked to Q1. see answer to Q1. No increase in occurrences observed

## **Any examples of occurrences when LASER or similar light source was used against airport personnel and ATCOs? Is there a growing trend with such events (taking into account COVID-19 lower traffic, so any changes with the rates...)**

No increase in occurrences observed. The EASA C-19 risk portfolio includes cyber risks.

## **During the restart we could expect a growth of such problems (taking into account that many experts reorientated after layoffs or changed their occupation, there will be a pressure to hire anyone interested in working, without too much focus on competencies).**

Part of the standard competency requirements when hiring new staff. In some cases knowledge was lost when experienced staff was laid off. This should be covered by SOPs and other forms of documentation like training documents. The pressure to hire anyone interested in the job has not been confirmed by the speakers.

## **Have you had to defer the testing of the airport emergency plan during these challenging times? If so, did you need agreement with your competent authority?**

In some cases certain emergency exercises were postponed, but always in consultation and following agreement of Competent Authority. An example is that the full scale emergency exercise had to be deferred from April 2021 to Q3 2021. Partial exercises can be conducted in order to maintain the emergency preparedness as mitigating measures.

## **How did you monitor the effectiveness of mitigation measures taken? For example, you mentioned the Stick to the SOPs to address the drift of safety behaviours - How did you monitor that?**

The ADR assessed the adherence to the SOP via the existing measures related to the management system, e.g. compliance monitoring.

## **In terms of wildlife management... a minor presence on movement areas maybe presents a high risk (in terms of location...) Which measures were implemented to mitigate this risk? Same measures or new specific ones?**

Depending on the risk assessment in some aerodromes additional wildlife controls were performed, including also better presence at risk areas based on location reports, risk assessment. In other aerodromes no specific measures apart from the standard wildlife management activities were needed.

The [EASA SIB on restart of aerodrome operations](#) focuses on wildlife management and EASA has also developed a [guide to WHM implementation](#).

## **Do you see any difficulty in attracting new staff? Since the job security is low due to COVID and the working environment/terms is/has always been tough (compared to other industries).**

Staff generally is happy to come back to the airport. In some cases changes in groundhandlers due to bankruptcy allowed the aerodrome to attract some of the previous GH staff.

In other cases, few staff are currently hired, but a general drop in interest could not be observed.

## **Are there initiatives in order to use the COVID impacts and lesson learned in order to develop general resilience and guidance materials for future events like the pandemic?**

Review of procedures and contingency plans is foreseen and will be completed after the restart. For now, no major issues were detected, including the consequences after the bankruptcy of one of the ground handling companies.

Post-pandemic review of emergency plans is not yet completed. Most probably there will be updates to the plans. In general, however, processes proved to already be very robust even for a crisis of this magnitude.

## **Managing Change - In terms of your airport rescue and firefighting service, have you been able to retain your promulgated category or has the category been adjusted to meet the needs of the largest aircraft operations during peak traffic periods? Do you have a RFFS temporary depletion policy?**

RFFS CAT 10 remained unchanged, even with the temporary reduction of available runways.

## **Is there any trend visible if newly hired staff is hired on a fix contract (permanent position) with the employer directly or staff hiring agency / o-hour contracts?**

This question relates to contractual provisions that depend on national labour law requirements.

## **How did you handle unforeseen circumstances - did you establish a crisis management board or team?**

Most of the unforeseen circumstances were handled by the APOC and the operational/contingency processes linked to it already in place. In case of insufficient possibilities to act, the issue will be elevated to a higher management level.

Crisis Management processes and structures were applied and adapted to the situation (e.g. only relevant members attended the crisis management board).

## **What are the psychological behavioral changes of the majority of work predicted in the Ramp Up Phase?**

Possible stress related issues due to the quick and unpredictable ramp-up of operations. Airlines tend to change quickly and handling companies need to act quickly. This also applies to aerodrome operators in terms of security operations.

No systematic prediction available. Most staff, however, is looking forward to the challenge, but also shows respect towards the expected workload.



# **Are you talking to your staff about their safety concerns?**

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