



Preparing for the upcoming aviation safety audit

Why this newsletter?

This newsletter is meant to bring some basics of aviation safety to your attention once more. This and the next newsletters may help you better appreciate your role in the upcoming ICAO audit.



Supporting safety improvements in
African Aviation

Unique international position of your job

In many countries, the Ministry of Transport is the one that is most influenced by international regulations. Many other Ministries may take guidance material from international (United Nations) organisations. But those Ministries are not bound by all kind of technical requirements as is the case in aviation. Most work relating to safety in aviation is linked to the 1944 Chicago Convention that establishes the International Civil Aviation Organisation or ICAO. As you may know, a convention or a treaty is an agreement in written form between countries that is intended to establish a relationship governed by international law. Only states that are parties to a convention are bound by it. Your country is quite likely a party to it as well as another 189 states. With 190 member states, almost all nations of the world are heavily influenced by the work of ICAO.

Why ICAO?

To facilitate the *international* operation of aviation, airlines, airports and government authorities must comply with a large number of rules in order to operate within international safety standards. These rules have been agreed internationally and make accepting each others airlines and services much easier.

ICAO rules

Many of the rules of ICAO are binding in international law. In this, it differs from guidance material provided by numerous other bodies affiliated to the United Nations such as the World Health Organisation. The ICAO rules are called Standards and Recommended Practices. Next to those Standards and Recommended Practices, there is a whole range of guidance documentation on almost every subject, making worldwide standardisation in this global industry easier.

There are safety rules for almost any area of aviation, contained in 18 so called Annexes to the Chicago Convention. These annexes contain the standards and recommended practices. They cover issues such as the issuing of pilot's licenses and the safe use (operation) of aircraft. Other topics covered are requirements for maintenance of aircraft, rules on communication equipment as well as the lay out of airports and the organisation of airport fire services. The constant advance of knowledge & technology leads to continuous improvement of safety standards. The international rules are therefore being regularly changed and improved.



www.aviassist.org

e-mail: info@aviassist.org

In association with:



Why an ICAO audit?

In practice, it had been noticed that some countries do not themselves have sufficient financial resources or know-how to comply with international safety standards. Given the highly international character of aviation, this can create a weak link in the chain of worldwide air safety.

Traditionally, the International Civil Aviation Organization has no means to force countries to implement the rules. The Chicago Convention is only asking countries to tell ('*notify*') ICAO if they haven't managed to implement a standard.

Aviation has grown tremendously over the past decades. 'Unsafely' in one region of the world more and more influences safety in other regions. Since 1999, ICAO checks whether its rules are indeed implemented through audits in all 190 ICAO Member States. These audits lead to a report in which an overview is given of the (level of) implementation of the rules. Also, the reports provided recommendations to States on how to correct any deficiencies found.

What is audited?

So far, the audits have mostly focused on safety oversight by the government, covered by three out of the 18 annexes. Now, the audits pay attention to almost all annexes, providing a much more complete overview of a country's system to keep safety in line. From March 2008 onwards, the reports of the audits are public and available to each and every newspaper on the world through ICAO's website (www.icao.int). It is only a matter of time before reputable newspapers pick up those reports and begin highlighting the bad aviation safety performers.



There are ICAO Annexes for:

1. Personnel licensing (pilots, air traffic controllers etc.)
2. Rules of the air
3. Meteorological services
4. Aeronautical charts
5. Units of measurement used in aviation
6. Operation of aircraft (safe use of aircraft)
7. Aircraft nationality and registration
8. Airworthiness of aircraft (safe maintenance of aircraft)
9. Facilitation (immigration, customs, public health etc.)
10. Aeronautical telecommunications
11. Air traffic services
12. Search and Rescue
13. Aircraft accident and incident investigation
14. Airports
15. Aeronautical information services
16. Environmental protection
17. Security
18. Transport of dangerous goods by air

Has my country been audited before?

Quite likely, yes. This audit is the third audit cycle for most countries. At the upcoming audit, it will have to show good progress in all lines of work, including yours!

In the next issue:

- Eight critical elements of safety oversight