

The following document is a synopsis of the responses to the IAA 'request for Comment' issued by the IAA in December 2009. The document groups the key responses under seven headings and outlines the IAA comments and proposed action under each of the headings.

Due to the nature of the responses and the differing requirements in commercial and general aviation the information is being presented in two distinct groupings – Commercial aviation and General Aviation.

Commercial Aviation

1. Methods to report occurrences to the IAA

<p>Synopsis of Responses</p>
<p>Presently IAA require approved organisations to report occurrences using two systems:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Flight Operations Reports through SOTS: This system permits Flight-related occurrences to be sent electronically in an agreed format to the Flight Ops division of the IAA; b. Maintenance / Technical reports: These are sent manually to the Airworthiness section in the IAA. <p>A number of commercial organisations commented that this is unsatisfactory and that there should be a single format report electronically transmitted to a single point of contact within the IAA.</p> <p>Also, in completing the form, it was suggested that a list of headline categories would be useful.</p>
<p>IAA Comments</p>
<p>The IAA accepts the need to streamline the process for submitting occurrences and to provide a list of headline categories. The IAA will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) commence a trial of a single point of contact for commercial organizations before the end of May 2010 with completion of the rollout to all commercial organizations by October 2010, subject to successful completion of the trial. 2) produce a list of headline categories for use when completing the standard form by the end of June 2010.

2. IAA dissemination of occurrence trends

Synopsis of Responses

Two commentators stated that they are unaware of any occasion where the IAA voluntarily released trending data from its occurrence reporting database. It is their opinion that this is essential to give operators the benefit of the knowledge therein and to foster a sense of purpose around Mandatory Reporting.

One commentator suggested the IAA adopt a similar approach to the UK CAA and issue a monthly de-identified list of events to all participants of its MOR system.

In addition, access to the Euro database should be facilitated and made relatively straightforward and mechanisms for accessing national and EU-held data need to be published. They should be user-friendly but de-identified.

Overall, it was felt there is a lack of feedback by the IAA on the performance of the occurrence reporting system and on the identification of safety issues or trends.

IAA Comments

The IAA accepts the comments outlined above and recognize the need to provide the commercial operators information on trends for the key risk areas and that this is essential to foster support for occurrence reporting. The IAA is currently implementing a State Safety Programme (SSP) and safety analysis and promotion of safety information are important elements of an SSP. The IAA has developed in-house capability to perform detailed analysis and has started to refine internal processes to ensure the safety trends can be identified in the most effective and timely manner.

The IAA believes it will be difficult to provide a de-identified list of events without inadvertently allowing the reporting entity be identified. This is primarily due to the small size of the Irish industry (e.g. there are only 18 AOCs in Ireland compared to 179 in the UK) and that many AOCs are the only operator of specific aircraft types.

The IAA agrees that access to the European database should be facilitated in accordance with the provisions of the applicable Commission Regulation (EC) No 1330/2007. At present the IAA, on behalf of the state, is developing memorandum of understanding with other EU states, however, progress at the EU level is relatively slow and the IAA cannot commit to a date by which time each approved organization will be able to request data. It should be noted that EASA does issue an annual safety review for Europe and that it is currently developing a European Safety Plan that will highlight the key risk areas and the proposed action plan for Europe. The occurrence trends for Ireland will also be synopsized and published in future versions of the IAA Annual Safety Review.

3. Confidence in the confidentiality of the system

<p>Synopsis of Responses</p>
<p>There were no adverse comments about the confidentiality of the existing system. Indeed the comments tended to suggest the IAA are too confidential with any information on occurrence reporting.</p> <p>One commentator suggested the confidentiality may become more difficult if the IAA do become more dynamic and issue trend information and monthly de-identified reports.</p>
<p>IAA Comments</p>
<p>As per item 2 above the IAA will undertake to provide aggregated trend information from the occurrence data.</p> <p>The IAA will continue to ensure that the occurrence data is fully protected thereby ensuring that individual approved organizations cannot be identified from any safety data released by the IAA.</p>

4. Requirement for a Confidential reporting system independent of IAA

<p>Synopsis of Responses</p>
<p>The comments on the need for a confidential system, similar to CHIRP, were conflicting.</p> <p>Some commentators felt the introduction of a confidential system similar to CHIRP was unnecessary, would be difficult to implement and virtually impossible to release any information from the system without identifying the reporter. Others commented that the Irish aviation sector urgently needs a confidential reporting system and that any additional confidential reporting system that encourages a reporting culture across all aspects of aviation and that is operated in a confidential and professional manner is to be welcomed.</p>
<p>IAA Comments</p>
<p>The request for comment process has confirmed that there is a clear difference of opinion on the need for this system.</p> <p>The existing IAA occurrence system allows voluntary occurrence reports be submitted confidentially to the IAA. The details of these reports are processed internally in a confidential manner similar to the mandatory occurrences. The IAA will not disclose any details of a confidential report to any external organization that would allow the reporting person to be identified.</p> <p>This request for comment process is part of an ongoing review of the occurrence reporting system. The IAA will continue the analysis of confidential reporting and will introduce proposed improvements before August 2010.</p>

5. Definitions of Occurrences and understanding of what is to be reported.

Synopsis of Responses
<p>One commentator suggested the existing legislation is too ambiguous and this can lead to a fear of reporting. The various definitions of occurrence, incident and accident need to be looked at and rationalised. Common definitions - both internally, across operators and the IAA and indeed internationally - are the basis for an effective reporting system.</p>
IAA Comments
<p>The IAA has recently updated the occurrence reporting section of the IAA website with the aim of improving the understanding of the existing legislation, the obligations of the aviation community to report and the methods to report.</p> <p>There are numerous pieces of legislation which refer to accidents, incidents and occurrences (see the IAA website at http://www.iaa.ie/index.jsp?p=148&n=495 for a current list).</p> <p>Most aviation regulation is now being developed at a European level and the EU is currently developing a new regulation to implement ICAO Annex 13 requirements uniformly across Europe (see EU Parliament website http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5821142 for details).</p> <p>It is anticipated that this new EU regulation will bring a clearer understanding of the terms accident, incident and occurrence as they apply in Europe. It is anticipated that this new regulation shall be available in the 4th quarter of 2010.</p> <p>The general advisory material published on occurrence reporting shall be updated to include a listing of all definitions of accident, serious incident, incident and occurrence.</p>

General Aviation

6. Confidence in the confidentiality of the system

Synopsis of Responses

The comments received were quite clear that there is a lack of trust within the GA community that the IAA will use the data for safety analysis only. There is also a concern that the confidentiality of the reporter is not adequately protected. The comments received suggest that people perceive that by reporting an occurrence to the IAA you are exposing yourself to possible licence revocation/suspension and even prosecution. As one commentator explained 'most GA operators rank 'occurrence reporting' with personal taxation.....necessary, but to be avoided as much as possible'.

One commentator suggested that the key to improving reporting is the promotion and effective implementation of a 'no blame culture'. Indeed the promotion of safety initiatives including occurrence reporting was identified by a number of commentators as key to improving the current level of reporting.

IAA Comments

The IAA accepts that there is a lack of trust of the IAA to use the occurrence reports for only safety analysis and that they will not be used to bring sanctions or initiate prosecution proceedings.

The General Advisory Memorandum G03/09 available on IAA website at <http://www.iaa.ie/index.jsp?p=93&n=97&a=225&pp=470&nn=474&IID=743> page 6 states the IAA position on providing assurance regarding any prosecution action.

The IAA acknowledges that it will be a slow process to develop the trust and there is a dilemma – people will only report if they trust the IAA and trust can only be established when the IAA have shown they have received occurrences and have not acted inappropriately with the information supplied.

The IAA proposes to work with representative bodies on how an effective reporting system can be implemented. This may include using representative bodies or a representative committee to process occurrences reported by the GA community. The IAA shall develop specific proposals over the next two months and will request representative bodies to engage in a trial of a reporting system specific to the GA community.

7. Knowledge of Occurrence Reporting Process

Synopsis of Responses
<p>One commentator stated he had never seen an IAA occurrence reporting form until recently despite flying in Ireland for many years and that there is a lack of knowledge in general aviation on the purpose and process of occurrence reporting.</p>
IAA Comments
<p>The IAA accepts that the promotion of occurrence reporting in Ireland for the GA community has been ineffective. The IAA is currently in the process of developing a promotion strategy for general aviation that will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Improve the data available through the IAA website. 2) Consult with Training organizations and GA representative bodies in Ireland on how best to promote awareness of occurrence reporting. 3) Place advertisements in GA magazines and at suitable GA events. 4) Attend safety seminars, etc when invited.