

## **Introduction to Aviation Safety Auditing**

A safety Audit should identify “Risk and Exposure” throughout the various departments taking into full consideration all organisational activities including of course any outsourced activities.

The goal of the Safety Audit is to develop an initial understanding regarding exposures which can then be further explored and analysed as appropriate. We could say that safety auditing is a core safety management activity, providing a means of identifying potential problems before they have an impact on safety.

### **Safety Audits are Conducted:-**

- a) In order to assess the degree of compliance with the applicable safety regulatory requirements.
- b) Assess the level of user reporting and feedback regarding existing exposures – consider “non-reporting” is not an indicator of “no issues” rather consider ratios to known reports versus unknown events.
- c) Potential exposures driven by organisation weakness
- d) Potential exposure driven by organisation culture
- e) Potential issues associated with Competency
- f) Potential issues associated with Training

### **Performance of Safety Auditing**

Safety auditing uses elements of critical evaluation to consider, examine and review all activities performed by and for the organisation.

The audit may be total or focus on a specific element

Subjects which may be considered include :-

- a) Safety policy;

- b) Change Management;
- c) Operating Procedures;
- d) Emergency procedures.

The specific objective is identify weakness as well as areas of risk and to act as an initiator for the subsequent development of appropriate mitigation.

Typical the proposed mitigation once accepted by the business area owner will develop into an action plan to deliver the solution in a managed way.

### **The Audit Program**

An annual Audit Program should include

- a) Requirement for independence
- b) Full audit definition in respect of criteria, frequency, scope, and methods employed;
- c) Detailed procedures for planning and conduct of audits, reporting results and maintaining records;
- d) Details of how external audits of contractors and vendors will be performed

### **Detailed Safety Audits will look at the following**

- a) Organisational structure and staffing levels;
- b) Compliance with Policy, Process and Procedures
- c) Appropriate level of Competency managed throughout the business
- d) Training needs identified and delivered in a measured way
- e) Acceptable safety levels throughout all equipment employed by the organisation and its subcontractors
- f) Acceptable communication and promotion of all elements related to safety
- g) Effective process for continuous monitoring analysis and the development of mitigations for any identified safety issues.

h) Preparedness for any emergency which may affect the business

### **Delivering Safety Audits**

Auditor competence places a significant role in the effectiveness of any audit, and audits may be small and isolated or large and all encompassing

Consider the merits of focusing on one single business area at a time and developing a sequential approach to deliver the initial series of audits.

Thereafter audit periodicity should be related to the identified need so that the business areas requiring specific attention –receive it

Ad hoc audits carried out as a surveillance activity are of significant benefit to supplement a comprehensive audit program. Ad hoc audits may also be initiated following either an event, report or associated quality audit finding.

Safety audit data is essential and acts as a (Key Performance Indicator) KPI to build our metrics which demonstrate that we have both an acceptable level of safety and improving level of Safety Performance.

### **Performing an Audit**

A safety audit is wide ranging and quite different to a Quality assurance audit – It is not driven by compliance and it should be recognised that the findings may be very subjective. (The more evidence which can be provided the easier will be the acceptance). Acceptance of any perceived issue by the stakeholder or business area is extremely important.

In general the following points should be noted

a) Any identified issues should be clear concise and without ambiguity

b) At all times strive to be objective

c) The purpose of the safety audit is to improve the business ensure that the audit does NOT focus on individual rather it MUST focus on the business systems.