

Safety News

Most Wanted

The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has added a new aviation issue to its updated “Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements.”

The new entry calls for improved oversight of pilot proficiency and criticizes the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for what the NTSB characterizes as an unacceptable response to two 2005 safety recommendations, which said that the FAA should “require airlines to obtain histories of flight check failures by pilot applicants and to require special training programs for pilots who have demonstrated performance deficiencies.”

The 2010 update of the Most Wanted list retained five aviation issues that have appeared on previous versions of the list, including an entry calling for mandatory image recorders on large transport category aircraft, as well as on smaller aircraft that have no other recording

devices. The NTSB rated FAA progress on this issue as unacceptable.

“Although cockpit voice recorders and flight data recorders record sounds and relatively comprehensive airplane data during an emergency, they do not show the critical cockpit environment leading up to the emergency,” the NTSB said.

The NTSB also described FAA progress as unacceptable on two other issues — improving runway safety and reducing dangers to aircraft flying in icing conditions. Past runway safety recommendations from the NTSB have included requiring “moving map displays in the cockpit, giving immediate warnings to the cockpit of impending incursions and requiring landing distance assessments with an adequate safety margin for every landing.” The NTSB’s examination of airframe structural icing led to the conclusion that certification standards have been inadequate, the board said.



© Lowell Sannes/iStockphoto

FAA progress was characterized as “acceptable response, progressing slowly” in the two remaining aviation issues on the list — improved safety of emergency medical services flights, an area in which the FAA plans to issue a proposed rule, and crew resource management (CRM) for U.S. Federal Aviation Regulations Part 135 on-demand operators.

“The NTSB has investigated a number of Part 135 on-demand operators where such training was not provided, and errors by the crew led to accidents,” the board said, noting that the FAA has proposed requiring CRM training for these carriers.

Decrease Seen in ATM Link to Accidents

The number of aviation accidents in Europe involving air traffic management (ATM) is decreasing, according to a report by the Eurocontrol Safety Regulation Commission.

The commission’s annual safety report said that in 2009, no fatal accidents were “directly induced” by ATM; an “indirect ATM contribution was reported in two nonfatal accidents.

“This continues a trend seen over recent years where the number of ATM-related accidents has decreased year-on-year,” Eurocontrol said. The agency added, however, that progress toward full accident reporting by states is too slow and that more detailed risk analysis is necessary.

The report also criticized the lack of funding and resources at national supervisory authorities that oversee aviation safety processes in individual European countries, noting that the emphasis on safety must continue despite budgetary pressures.



© Mark Brouwer/Wikimedia

“It is clear that in the future, safety will be tested even more rigorously,” said Jos Wilbrink, chairman of the commission. “While the overall situation is improving on a long-term basis, in order to meet the tenfold safety improvement aim of the Single European Sky, further efforts will be needed.”

Cabin Crew Additions

The Australian Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) is proposing a change in the required ratio of cabin crewmembers to passenger seats in aircraft used in regular public transport and charter operations.

The agency is seeking public comments on a notice of proposed rulemaking that would require one cabin crewmember for every 50 passenger seats in aircraft with more than 36 seats and fewer than 216; the current requirement — in place since 1960 — has called for one cabin crewmember for 36 passenger seats.

“The change would bring Australia into line with leading aviation nations and standardize current cabin crew ratio approvals,” CASA said, adding that the current ratio “does not take into account significant improvements in aircraft design, crashworthiness, crew training, evacuation performance and survivability” that have been achieved in the past 50 years.

AVIATION
INDUSTRY EXPO™

Ground
Support

FBO/Aviation
Services

Aircraft
Maintenance

13TH ANNUAL

March 16-18, 2010 - Las Vegas Convention Center - Las Vegas, NV



The ONLY Annual Event Focused on Ground Support, FBO/Aviation Services and Aircraft Maintenance

Network with industry professionals from around the world. **View** the latest technologies from leading aviation service providers and equipment manufacturers. **Visit** the showcase of green products in the "Going Green" Pavilion. **See** equipment in action at "Demos on Demand" and much, much more!

**Register at www.AviationIndustryExpo.com
to waive the \$25 exhibit hall fee!**

Priority Code: ASW – 800.827.8009

Sponsored By:



cygnus
Business Media

Request for Safety Data

Aircraft Engineers International (AEI), which represents aviation maintenance personnel, has called on the European Commission to make public safety data involving the aviation operations under its jurisdiction.

AEI acted in response to a published report that indicated that 65,000 commercial passenger flights in the United States between 2003 and 2009 involved airplanes that were not airworthy. The report, in the *USA Today* newspaper, was based on an analysis of data from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The report also said that the FAA imposed \$28.2 million in fines against 25 U.S. airlines.

In Europe, AEI said, the European Commission “continues to protect the

airlines which are under its control by consistently refusing to release the relevant safety data.”

AEI cited one incident discussed in the *USA Today* article in which an airplane’s flight controls jammed shortly after takeoff. The FAA had criticized American Eagle, the operator of the airplane, for allowing it to continue operating despite earlier reports of vibration. In Europe, AEI said, it was “aware of one airline having flown an aircraft a further 505 times before the aircraft vibration was finally eliminated”; the airline was not fined, AEI said.

“This situation must change before the next preventable accident occurs, and one method of achieving this is



© goldhafen/iStockphoto

transparency,” AEI said. “European citizens have a right to know how European airlines are really performing.”

Industry Standards

In an effort to improve safety for flights in the mining and resource industry, Flight Safety Foundation is initiating the Basic Aviation Risk (BAR) Standard Program.

“Aviation risk management has always been one of the single greatest challenges to the safety of personnel in the resource sector,” said Trevor Jensen, Flight Safety Foundation

international program director, who heads the BAR program. “Combined with the challenging and often remote areas of operation, additional variables increase the difficulty, including the variety of aircraft types, adverse weather and terrain, wide number of aircraft operators and differing levels of regulatory oversight.”

The program is designed to provide a common safety approach for aircraft operations in the industry, which currently uses multiple aviation safety standards, depending on the expectations of individual companies. “This has the potential to introduce inefficiencies, varying degrees of acceptability and overall lower levels of flight safety assurance,” the Foundation said.

The program, developed in consultation with some of the world’s leading resource companies, will be managed by the FSF regional office in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

A full briefing on the program is available on the Foundation Web site at <flightsafety.org/files/bars_v2.pdf>.



Continuous Monitoring

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) plans to expand its safety oversight system with the introduction of an online reporting and data management system to monitor the oversight capabilities of ICAO member states.

Roberto Kobeh González, president of the ICAO Council, said in a speech in Madrid in January that the monitoring system also would enable ICAO to assess the safety level of aviation activities and evaluate safety management capabilities “in a harmonized and consistent manner.”

He said the introduction of the continuous monitoring approach is the next phase in a safety oversight system that began with the introduction of the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) in 1999. USOAP was expanded in 2004, and in 2006, ICAO member states agreed to post the summary results of USOAP audits on the ICAO Web site. He called that agreement “tacit recognition that transparency is fundamental to a safe air transport system.”

Proposed Penalties

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has proposed two separate civil penalties totaling more than \$5 million against American Eagle Airlines for failing to ensure that the weight of baggage was calculated properly and for using airplanes with landing gear doors that had been improperly repaired.

The FAA said that, between January and October 2008, the airline conducted at least 154 passenger-carrying flights in which “baggage weight listed on airplane cargo load sheets disagreed with data entered into the company’s electronic weight and

balance system.” After American Eagle was informed of the problem, the company operated at least 39 flights without correcting the situation, the FAA said. The proposed fine was \$2.5 million.

American Eagle has since revised its *Station Operating Manual* to ensure the confirmation of proper weight and balance information, the FAA said.

In a separate action, the FAA proposed a \$2.9 million civil penalty against the airline for operating more than 1,000 flights with airplanes on which improper repairs had been performed on landing gear doors. The flights occurred between February and May 2008 on four Bombardier jets; the airplanes’ landing gear doors had not been repaired in accordance with a 2006 airworthiness directive, which required inspections of landing gear doors on some Bombardier airplanes for cracks or other damage, removal of the affected doors, and installation of new or repaired doors, the FAA said.

American Eagle found damaged doors on four airplanes, but “rather than removing the doors, the airline repaired them while they remained on the planes,” the FAA said.

In each instance, the airline was given 30 days to appeal the FAA action.



© Manuel Rocha/Wikimedia

In Other News ...

An audible alert system has been developed to help prevent the unintentional deployment of airplane **evacuation slides**. Curtiss-Wright Controls says its SmartHandle, which can be designed to fit any aircraft door, can be programmed to issue alerts in either a male or female voice and in any language. ... The Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO) and aviation stakeholders throughout the Middle East have signed a **Middle East Declaration** pledging to work for improved air traffic management in the region. Signers said the declaration will pave the way for harmonization of air navigation services. ... The Civil Aviation Safety Authority of Australia is working to standardize procedures for the **aerial firefighting** industry, which has grown significantly in recent years.

Mandatory Simulator Training

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority of Australia (CASA) is considering action that could eventually require pilots of a range of aircraft to undergo mandatory simulator training.

The agency solicited comments from aircraft operators, pilots and flight simulator training organizations on 12 options outlined in a discussion paper issued in December 2009. The options differ in three areas: the type of training activities that should be conducted in a flight simulator, the types of aircraft and operations that would be affected, and the availability and location of certificated training devices. Comments were due by Feb. 19.

Current CASA regulations do not require simulator training.

The discussion paper said, however, that “the quality and scope of training available in a flight simulator is superior to the training available in an actual aircraft. The accessibility of sophisticated simulators has opened up new avenues of pilot training, permitting the demonstration of nearly every possible emergency scenario during the course of a training and checking program.”

The discussion paper said that any new simulator requirement would not impose additional training time; instead, simulator training would replace existing components of training programs that currently are conducted in aircraft “and place them in the safer, more versatile environment of a flight simulator.”



© Jordan Tan/Dreamstime

Compiled and edited by Linda Werfelman.