

When the FSF Audit Team completes a safety audit a final report is submitted to the client that details the *observations, findings and recommendations* identified during the review. All observations in our reports are documented policies, procedures and practices that exceed the industry best practices; the findings identify areas in which the team would advise the client to adopt better policies, procedures or practices to parallel industry best practices; and recommendations describe one or more actions that could be taken by the client to meet industry best practices.

This article will focus on the FSF Audit Team recommendations to correct several of the most frequent findings identified in the Administration and Organization topic area (*Aviation Safety World*, September 2006, p. 46).

In 13 audits of flight operations, or 65 percent of 20 audits completed, it was found that internal communications systems were lacking or underdeveloped. These recommendations were offered:

- Establish a consistent pattern of leadership team meetings. Include line-assigned personnel regularly to develop an environment of inclusiveness and teamwork.
- The director/manager/chief pilot should make every effort to keep his or her personnel informed on corporate matters that will, or could, affect flight operations personnel.
- Develop a flight crew information file, in electronic or hard-copy format, that provides a continuous flow of operations information to the crewmembers. Establish a file management system that ensures continuous updates and an archival record.
- Conduct all-hands meetings no less frequently than once each quarter. Take advantage of corporate board meeting opportunities when personnel are in one place.



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The Way

BY DAROL HOLSMAN

This article extends the discussion of the most consistent aviation department problems found by the Flight Safety Foundation Audit Team, based on the final reports submitted to clients that contracted for operational safety audits during 2004. The recommended solutions for the findings are the opinions of the FSF Audit Team. Some are based on regulatory requirements; some on FSF recommended safety practices; and others on the industry best practices.

- Hold pilot meetings following the all-hands meetings. Always schedule a safety presentation during pilot meetings.

In another 13 flight operations it was found that there were no desktop procedures developed to enhance personnel job assignment continuity. To those departments these recommendations were offered:

- Identify the key personnel in the flight operation who could subject the organization to a single-point failure if that individual suddenly were not available for an extended time for any reason.
- Establish an internal administrative requirement that key personnel will develop desktop resources — such as digital documents — that describe the procedures and practices in their area of responsibility in case they are unable to perform their jobs. This should not be simply a listing of duties and responsibilities, but should detail actual actions, paperwork flow and shortcuts to getting the work done.
- Management should review the desktop resources when first completed and annually thereafter.
- Identify a backup for each key person and provide opportunities for job training and acting assignments — that is, substitutes — when key personnel are absent for vacation or training, or on assignment.

In eight flight operations — 40 percent of the total audits — it was found that the corporate administrative manager lacked adequate knowledge of corporate aviation. These recommendations were offered:

- Executive management should authorize the aviation corporate administrative manager to attend the Darden Graduate School of Business Administration course, “Managing the Corporate Aviation Function,” at the University of Virginia,

or a similar course of study at another university.

- Coordinate with the corporate administrative manager to provide access to the National Business Aviation Association certified aviation manager courses on-line.
- The director/manager/chief pilot should develop an in-depth aviation department orientation program for the corporate executive to whom he or she reports.
- Regularly conduct face-to-face meetings with the corporate manager and aviation department personnel.

Another eight flight departments were found to lack a long-term and short-term succession plan for leadership team members. These recommendations were offered:

- Identify the primary “acting” replacement for each leadership position in the organization, such as director, chief pilot and maintenance manager; for example, the chief pilot is designated to be the acting replacement for the director. Include this information in the flight operations manual so there is no question about who is in charge when the incumbent is absent.
- Establish a program that will ensure the development of candidates for management positions in the aviation department.
- Assign alternate candidates positions in management, providing them opportunities to develop self-confidence and allowing management to evaluate their capabilities.●

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