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Audits Discover Consistent Inconsistency

BY DAROL HOLSMAN

One of the real surprises discovered by the Flight Safety Foundation Audit Team over the past six years is that many corporate Part 91 operators and a significant number of Part 135 operators audited have figured out 105 different ways to do the same task. That number — 105 — reflects the total number of audits in which I have had a role in that period of time.

The Foundation has been conducting audits since 1962; the team lately has completed 15–20 OSA projects a year. Despite the 2002 introduction of the increasingly popular IS-BAO Audit, the OSA format is still the most popular audit package with the FSF clients.

The FSF OSA review format consists of 12 major topics. This article addresses the most frequent problem areas found during 20 client reviews in 2004. The audit findings are based on

industry best standards and may or may not be based on FARs or other regulatory standards.

This is the start of a series of articles featuring the most common mistakes discovered by the audit team, starting out with a listing of general topic areas in which weaknesses have been found so that a flight operation leadership team can start to review their own organizations for similar signs. But this is only the first step, for once the problem areas have been identified the next step is to find solutions for specific issues. Future articles will drill deeper into these frequent findings and pass on approaches the audit team has found to be effective. ●

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Most Common Faults Found by Audit Team (out of 20 audits)		
	Number of Audits	Percentage
Administration and Organization		
Internal communications systems lacking or underdeveloped	13	65.0
No desktop procedures to enhance personnel job assignment continuity	13	65.0
Corporate administrative manager lacks knowledge of corporate aviation	8	40.0
Lacks long and short term leadership succession plans	8	40.0
Operational Policies and Implementation		
No administrative tracking of deviations authorized to the flight operations manual	14	70.0
No advance scheduling of days off or vacations for pilots	7	35.0
Failure to make full use of the computer based scheduling program	7	35.0
Crew duty standards exceed the 14 hours recommended by FSF	6	30.0
Flight Operations		
Lack of consistent pattern of pilot line or standardization checks	8	40.0
Lack of complete aircraft type-specific standard operating procedures	7	35.0
Flight Monitoring		
Inconsistent crew altitude awareness callouts	6	30.0
Training Program		
Pilot training records inconsistent and improperly organized	6	30.0
Inadequate pilot supplemental training program	6	30.0
Personnel		
New employee background checks inadequate or not completed	6	30.0
Air transport rating pilots maintain only Second Class Medical certificate	6	30.0
Aircraft Maintenance		
Aircraft master logs inadequately safeguarded against fire or other disasters	10	50.0
Inspection and quality control policies and procedures poorly defined	9	45.0
Technician maintenance not properly signed off	9	45.0
No inventory control system or shelf life monitoring	8	40.0
Tool calibration policies and procedures incomplete; available automation not used to track calibration updates	7	35.0
Aircraft Minimum Equipment List documents not current or do not exist	6	30.0
Aircraft Configuration		
Aircraft weight and balance management system is not in accordance with FAA Advisory Circular 120-27E	11	55.0
Passenger information cards not installed or did not reflect location of safety and emergency equipment	9	45.0
Airport Facilities		
Hangar and shop workplace safety standards not in accordance with OSHA/EPA or National Safety Council standards	11	55.0
Security		
Aircraft security at contract maintenance facilities not addressed by policies	11	55.0
Inadequate door access control or video monitoring of entrances and hangar doors	9	45.0
Undocumented facility security program	7	35.0
Lack of a designated security program coordinator	7	35.0
Lack of any formal training for security program coordinator	7	35.0