

Pilot Participation in Safety Risk Assessments

BACKGROUND

IFALPA strongly supports the implementation and execution of thorough risk assessments by safety departments to ensure in-depth safety analysis. Most current risk assessment practices do not include pilot safety advocates from the Member Association. IFALPA recognizes the vital role of these frontline pilots in ensuring the highest standards of aviation safety.

The positive effect on flight safety through risk assessments in the context of a functioning safety management system is well recognized across the aviation industry. Provisions in ICAO Annex 19 and the Safety Management Manual (SMM Doc. 9859) require the performance of safety risk assessments and further detail the extent to which these risk assessments should be performed. This process culminates in the mitigation of risk through universal precautions, engineering controls, or work practices.

A thorough risk assessment can only be accomplished if all stakeholders have been heard in accordance with the latest recommended practices. Unfortunately, airline safety departments often exclude pilot associations from the Safety Risk Assessment (SRA) process. This results in a potentially biased outcome, negating the possibility of a comprehensive assessment. Including pilot safety advocates will strengthen trust in the safety management system and provide an additional barrier against errors by identifying the true threats in the environment.

Transparency in the SRA is imperative to the continuous improvement in Positive Safety Culture. Organizations strive to develop trust and improved safety measures with a robust reporting culture. Transparency in the SRA will result in improved procedures, streamlined operations, and cost savings. Pilot safety advocates apply their operational knowledge of current system threats to develop robust SRAs that facilitate the mitigation of risk and overall improvement in safety and performance.

Participation by pilot safety advocates ensures that operational expertise is represented and allows for greater collaboration. Including all stakeholders in the process generates buy-in and fosters credibility and trust.

This participation is necessary in a Positive Safety Culture as it promotes accountability and assists with the overall workload, resulting in an improved final product.

The information contained in safety data must be kept confidential. As a condition of participation, all stakeholders should follow agreed-upon rules for data protection.

POSITION

IFALPA believes that pilot safety advocates from the Member Association should be included in the safety risk assessment process as representatives of frontline pilots.