Flight Safety Enhancement – In Need of a Global Approach

Aviation safety, measured in terms of number of hull losses per departure, has reached a mature but stable level. Any further enhancement of this achievement requires a systemic approach where the aircraft, the operations and the operating environment are considered globally.

Introducing the Flight Operations Briefing Notes Concept

The Flight Operations Briefing Notes have been designed to allow an eye-opening and self-correcting accident-prevention strategy. The initial set of Approach-and-Landing Flight Operations Briefing Notes has been developed by Airbus in the frame of the Approach-and-Landing Accidents Reduction (ALAR) Task Force led by the Flight Safety Foundation (FSF). The wide acceptance of the Approach-and-Landing Briefing Notes by the pilots’ community and the positive feedback received from customers have prompted Airbus to initiate the development of new sets of Briefing Notes, in order to cover the entire flight profile and address the main threats and hazards to flight operations safety.

Accident-prevention Strategy

To support this strategy, each Flight Operations Briefing Note:

- Presents the subject and its associated hazard to flight operations safety, using background information and statistical data;
- Emphasizes the applicable standards and best practices (e.g., standard operating procedures [SOPs], supplementary techniques, operational recommendations and training guidelines);
- Lists and discusses the operational and human factors that may cause flight crews to deviate from applicable standards; This section constitutes an eye-opener to assist the reader in assessing his/her own exposure;
- Provides or suggests company accident-prevention-strategies and/or personal lines-of-defense; This section will assist the reader in identifying company or personal prevention strategies and/or corrective actions;

Flight operations briefing notes
A Tool For Flight Operations Safety Enhancement

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On many occasions, the Flight Safety Dept in Airbus were receiving request from newly established and charter airlines for assistance in setting up a Flight Safety function.

At that time, Airbus being a manufacturer rather than an operator, felt we did not have the competence to offer this experience. However, there were many airlines around the world that already had in place a well run Flight Safety function. So it was logical to request the well-established airlines to assist other airlines.

So the project was launched by Airbus to create a kind of guide book (a What to Do and How to Do) that would enable a newly appointed Flight Safety Manager to set up his function. We were quite fortunate at this time to recruit Mr Dennis Johnson who had just retired from Virgin Atlantic as their Flight Safety Manager. Dennis was the principle author of what later became the Airbus Flight Safety Manager’s Handbook. During the drafting of this handbook, there were several round-the-table reviews of the contents with several airlines who were kind enough to actively participate; namely, Aer Lingus, Airtours International, Gulf Air, Royal Jordanian, Transaer together with many others (Airtours International, China Airlines, Costa Rica DGAC, Eyptair, TAM and TransAsia) sending in their comments.

The handbook was finally published in March 1999 and up until today we still receive many requests for copies. This handbook was later used by GAIN as a basis to create an expanded version. The book was so successful it was a finalist in the Flight International Safety awards. The award judges considered the Airbus approach “as just what the industry needs providing a first class template for any new flight safety operation”. One major airline’s senior air safety investigator described it as “unique in its scope where all aspects of a flight safety management programme are addressed, from corporate commitment through accident/incident investigations, to listings of available safety resources”.

If airlines wish to receive copies of this handbook, simply contact Airbus Flight Safety. Contact: Mrs Nuria Soler nuria.soler@airbus.com.
SAFETY FIRST

The Airbus Safety Magazine
For the enhancement of safe flight through increased knowledge and communications.

Safety First is published by the Flight Safety Department of Airbus. It is a source of specialist safety information for the restricted use of flight and ground crew members who fly and maintain Airbus aircraft. It is also distributed to other selected organisations.

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