



International Civil Aviation Organization
**Asia Pacific Regional Aviation Safety Team - Second Meeting of the
Accident Investigation Ad hoc Working Group (APRAST-AIG AWG/2)**
(Macao, China, 6-7 September 2012)

Agenda Item 3: Development of an Action Plan to improve the accident/incident investigation capability in the APAC region

TRAINING OF ACCIDENT INVESTIGATORS

(Presented by Hong Kong, China)

SUMMARY

Aircraft accident investigation is a highly specialised task which should only be undertaken by appropriately trained and suitably qualified persons. This paper highlights the importance for an investigation unit to have a structured and systematic training programme for its investigators to discharge their duties.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aircraft accident investigation is a highly specialised task which should only be undertaken by suitably qualified persons. In this connection, it is important that an investigation unit has a structured and systematic training programme for its investigators to ensure that they can discharge their investigation duties in the most professional, impartial and effective manner.

1.2 It is equally important that suitable persons with the right calibre should be identified in the first place and the training for them conducted progressively commensurate with expanding responsibility for the various roles in an investigation team.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Accident Investigation Division

2.1.1 Hong Kong has an independent investigation system under the management of Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department (HKCAD). The Accident Investigation Division (AID), a division under the HKCAD, is responsible for the investigation of aircraft accidents and serious incidents in accordance with the Civil Aviation (Investigation of Accidents) Regulations. These Regulations are independent from other regulatory regulations. The conduct of the investigations in Hong Kong, China is also fully in compliance with the Standards and Recommended Practices of the ICAO Annex 13.

2.1.2 The AID will be mobilised when required by drawing specially qualified staff from other technical Divisions within HKCAD. Currently, it has a pool of 24 qualified investigators headed by the Director-General of Civil Aviation who is appointed as the Chief Inspector of

Accidents (CIA) ultimately responsible for the conduct of investigations. The AID investigators have considerable practical experiences in aviation from a range of professional backgrounds, including :

- Flight operations;
- Aircraft design and engineering;
- Airworthiness;
- Air traffic management;
- Special aviation subjects such as human factors, flight data recorders, survival aspects, etc.

2.2 Training of Accident Investigators

2.2.1 The AID recognises the importance of a structured and systematic training programme for its investigators. To be 'suitably qualified', an investigator has to go through the comprehensive training processes involving:

- Initial Training;
- On-the-job Training;
- Recurrent Training;
- Specialised Training;

2.2.2 To start with, an apprentice investigator will be given a thorough in-house familiarization, followed by a full course on accident investigation by investigation agencies or academic institutions. Most AID investigators attended the 6-week accident investigation course conducted by the Cranfield University in the United Kingdom. The main purpose of such basic training is to equip our aviation professionals with the understanding of international requirements and the major technical aspects and skills in accident investigation. The in-house training also provides the staff with the better understanding of the HKCAD requirements and procedures in investigations.

2.2.3 In order to share the best practices of other investigation agencies, arrangements would also made for the apprentice investigators to attach to other investigation agencies, such as the UK AAIB and the French BEA afterwards.

2.2.4 Within AID, apprentice investigators will be guided and mentored by experienced investigators in actual investigations. With more investigation experiences, investigators will be afforded with expanding responsibility as an accident investigator, accredited representative, group leader, Investigator-in-Charge (IIC) of less complex investigation, and eventually an IIC of a major accident involving a large transport category aircraft.

2.2.5 The training should not be one-off but an ongoing professional development. Investigators will attend refresher courses, seminars and workshops to keep abreast of new development in technologies and international practices. AID also endeavours to arrange its investigators to participate in various investigation exercises to keep up with the standard during 'peace time'.

2.2.6 Since accident investigation often requires knowledge and skills in specialised areas, it is essential that an investigation team receives specialised training and has a good representation of expertise in areas such as flight data recorders, underwater search techniques, airframe structure, next-of-kin handling, media communications, etc. Within AID, investigators are trained in various corresponding specialised areas depending on their professional background and experiences.

2.2.7 At present, 24 investigators have successfully completed the training and have been appointed as Inspectors of Accidents under the Hong Kong laws. Prior to the appointment, a detailed acceptance assessment was conducted and the assessment would examine their personal attributes such as integrity and impartiality, background experience, training and qualification required.

2.3 **Future Development**

2.3.1 With the commissioning of the new HKCAD Headquarters in end 2012, a new Accident Investigation Complex will be established with command centre, hangar, investigation laboratory, interview rooms, night suites for investigators, etc. The new Training and Conference facilities will also allow AID to organise more accident investigation activities and trainings for our investigators and those in the region.

3. **ACTION BY THE MEETING**

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) encourage States/Administrations to develop a structured and systematic training programme for their investigators in order that they can discharge their duties in an effective manner;
- b) note that with the new facilities in its Headquarters, HKCAD could organise more accident investigation seminars and training for the region in the future.

— END —