

Public information (unclassified)



# Aircraft Operator Security Programmes and Supplementary Station Procedures

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This guidance helps address the development and processing of Aircraft Operator Security Programmes and Supplementary Station Procedures

**NOTE.**— This guidance material was developed by the Working Group on Guidance Material (WGGM) and endorsed by the Aviation Security Panel at its Thirty-third meeting (May 2022), which recommended that it be made available as soon as practicable. It is included in the 13th edition of the ICAO *Aviation Security Manual* (Doc 8973 – Restricted), which is scheduled to be published by November 2022.

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# AIRCRAFT OPERATORS<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 General

1.1.1 Aircraft operators have a responsibility to the travelling public and their employees to conduct secure operations. This obligation includes the conduct of aircraft checks and searches, protection of aircraft, aircraft maintenance areas and other restricted areas, and security measures for transit operations, baggage, cargo, mail and catering. Consequently, commercial aircraft operators should develop security procedures that comply with Annex 17 provisions and NCASPs.

1.1.2 In order to fulfil aviation security obligations under Annex 17, NCASPs and associated regulations, commercial aircraft operators should:

- a) establish, implement and maintain an Aircraft Operator Security Programme (AOSP) that meets the requirements of the NCASP of the State of the Operator;
- b) establish, implement and maintain written supplementary station procedures (SSPs), annexed to the AOSP, that meet any requirements of the NCASP of other States where operations are conducted that are not addressed in the AOSP;
- c) include, as deemed necessary by the operator, additional elements in their AOSP that are specific to the operations and policies of the operator (e.g. requirements mandated by the operator's security management system — SeMS). These additional elements, which are not required by States, could be included in the main body of the AOSP or as a separate appendix;
- d) appoint an accountable executive for security, at the senior executive level (or with direct access to the highest level of management within the organization), who will act as the head of security. This appointment is essential to the development, effective implementation, and overall accountability for the application of the AOSP;
- e) establish and maintain a contingency plan — contingency plans should be consistent with national and airport contingency plans;
- f) establish, implement and maintain a security training programme — the development and implementation of this programme should be undertaken in accordance with the State's NCASP, and should reflect the standards, policies and procedures contained in the NCASP;
- g) establish, implement and maintain a quality control programme — the development and implementation of this programme should be undertaken in line with the State's NCASP and the AOSP. The implementation of quality control functions, including audits, inspections, tests and surveys, is essential to ensuring the proper implementation and sustainability of effective aviation security measures in commercial air transport operations; and
- h) establish, implement and maintain an effective risk assessment process to proactively address existing and emerging threats and risks. The risk assessment process should demonstrate that the aircraft operator is regularly reviewing and identifying threats to its operations, assessing the effectiveness of existing controls and identifying areas for improvement. The aircraft operator should maintain a risk register with reference to mitigation measures contained in the AOSP.

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<sup>1</sup> This section is meant for the use of States and operators to help them both understand their respective responsibilities, noting that the aircraft operator will ultimately need to adhere to the laws of their home State.

- 1.1.3 At a minimum, the following security-related matters should be addressed by aircraft operators:
- a) aircraft operator organization and designation of an accountable executive for security;
  - b) requirements for checks and searches of specific areas and accessible compartments of the interior and exterior of aircraft;
  - c) prevention of unauthorized access to aircraft;
  - d) passenger and baggage reconciliation;
  - e) the application of screening and/or protection measures for hold baggage, cargo, mail and in-flight supplies;
  - f) security of catering stores and supplies, aircraft cleaning and ground maintenance operations;
  - g) response procedures for crew members and other staff for threats and incidents, including the discovery of a suspected improvised explosive device on board;
  - h) crew member briefings concerning on-board armed escorts and in-flight security officers;
  - i) additional security measures for special or more threatening situations;
  - j) process for the issuance and management of crew identity cards<sup>2</sup> where applicable, which includes a mandatory background check;
  - k) recruitment and training (both initial and recurrent) of security staff and/or handling agents;
  - l) periodic verification of the implementation of security measures outsourced to external service providers so as to ensure their compliance with the operator's security programme; and
  - m) incident reporting.

- 1.1.4 In addition to Annex 17 provisions, Annex 6 prescribes that:
- a) aircraft operators shall establish and maintain a training programme to prepare crew members to act in a manner that will minimize the consequences of an act of unlawful interference;
  - b) pilots-in-command shall promptly submit reports on acts of unlawful interference;
  - c) an on-board checklist shall be available that provides details of aircraft search procedures, including searches for concealed weapons, explosives or other dangerous devices, and the appropriate course of action to be taken should a bomb or suspicious object be found; and
  - d) the flight crew compartment door on passenger aircraft shall be lockable from within the flight crew compartment.

## **1.2 Aircraft operator security programmes**

1.2.1 A written aircraft operator security programme (AOSP) should be established, implemented and maintained, in order to put into practice the applicable policy, regulations and requirements of the State of the Operator's

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<sup>2</sup> ICAO Annex 9 — *Facilitation* provisions on crew identity cards may apply.

NCASP. Aircraft operators should develop their own security requirements, procedures and instructions, and ensure that their security programmes and operations manuals are consistent with the laws and regulations of the State of Operator and/or Registry.

1.2.2 In addition to the AOSP required by the State of the Operator, aircraft operators should develop SSPs containing any applicable requirements contained in the NCASP of other States from which operations are conducted. These SSPs could form appendices to the AOSP or be handled separately and for the duration of the operations in those States.

1.2.3 The States of operation should share with aircraft operators operating in its territory, in advance of the commencement of operations, the appropriate parts of their NCASP and/or relevant information or guidelines to enable those aircraft operators to meet the national requirements. Those States should also share, in a practical and timely manner, any relevant information that could impact the risk assessments relating to an aircraft operators' operations.

1.2.4 The State of the Operator is responsible to ensure that the AOSP meets the requirements of their NCASP. To achieve this, States, under their national legislation and/or policy, may consider the need to formally approve AOSPs and/or subject them to appropriate review or verification processes based on established procedures. States of the Operator should ensure that the aircraft operators are aware of their policy and applicable processes.

1.2.5 The State of the Operator should establish a means to confirm their approval, review or verification of the AOSP and provide such acknowledgement<sup>3</sup> to the aircraft operator.

1.2.6 SSPs should be tailored for each airport/station where operations are conducted, and submitted upon request to the appropriate authority of the State in which that airport/station is located. The appropriate authority of those States where operations are conducted should be empowered to require foreign aircraft operators to establish, implement and maintain written SSPs that meet the requirements of the national civil aviation security programme of that State.

1.2.7 States could decide to either formally approve, review or verify SSPs, and should provide such acknowledgment to the aircraft operator<sup>3</sup> once the process is complete.

1.2.8 Aircraft operators should share their AOSP, upon request, with States where operations are conducted, in accordance with relevant requirements pertaining to the distribution of sensitive aviation security information. Caution should therefore be exercised when sharing AOSPs or SSPs with different States or entities, as AOSPs and SSPs may contain sensitive aviation security information. As restrictions in the sharing of such documents may apply, the aircraft operator remains obligated to protect such information from any unauthorized disclosure.

1.2.9 The AOSP, usually developed in the language of the State of the Operator, should also be provided in English for international purposes such as recognition by States other than the State of the Operator, as well as for security audits and inspections. SSPs are usually developed in the languages of both the State of the Operator and the State where operations are conducted. SSPs may also be made available in English for international purposes.

1.2.10 States may develop model programmes to be used by aircraft operators as their AOSP and/or SSPs. Such models may help reduce the bureaucracy of the document approval process and contribute to the transparency of aviation security measures accepted by States. These models should be opened for contributions and adaptations.

1.2.11 In lieu of requesting SSPs, States where operations are conducted (other than the State of the Operator) may request the acknowledgement that an aircraft operator's AOSP has been approved, reviewed or verified by the State of the Operator by directly requesting it from that State or via the aircraft operator.

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<sup>3</sup> States should consider including the following information when providing acknowledgment: aircraft operator accountable manager, reference # AOSP (or SSP) presented, date of approval of AOSP by the operator, validity if applicable, accountable official from the States of the Operators (AOSP) or Operations (SSP), Station and State (SSP), reference of NCASP used for compliance, confirmation that national requirements are met.

### 1.3 Aircraft operator security managers

1.3.1 Aircraft operators should appoint a security manager, or security managers, with a professional security background and familiarity with commercial air transport operations, and afforded sufficient authority to ensure the full implementation and enforcement of the AOSP.

1.3.2 Security managers should be appointed by the aircraft operator executive management, and should have direct communication with and/or report to the aircraft operator chief executive officer, chief operating officer and senior operations officers.

1.3.3 Security managers should be responsible for, inter alia:

- a) developing and maintaining the aircraft operator's overall security policy for acceptance by senior management;
- b) developing and promulgating company-wide security standards and practices;
- c) conducting security threat and risk assessments and management for all operations, which should be based on available information, including direct information collected by the operator, and appropriate threat and risk information received from the relevant authorities of the State of the Operator, the other States where operations are conducted, as well as from other aircraft operators and relevant aviation security service providers;
- d) developing or modifying the AOSP and its SSPs to correct deficiencies as necessary, and to comply with national laws and regulations of States from which the aircraft operator conducts flight operations;
- e) ensuring the AOSP and its SSPs are current and have been endorsed by the accountable executive and submitted to the appropriate authority for verification and approval;
- f) ensuring the continuing effectiveness of the AOSP and its SSPs through regular evaluations and inspections, and by encouraging internal security audit processes (internal quality control functions);
- g) establishing and maintaining effective liaison with all relevant authorities and stakeholders, in order to contribute to the industry's development of security systems and to comply with statutory requirements, taking into consideration the responsibilities of other relevant authorities with security functions;
- h) maintaining effective liaison with other departments of the aircraft operator, and especially senior management, so as to facilitate the implementation of effective security measures throughout the company;
- i) advising on and managing all security systems in use by the aircraft operator, and advising senior management on all aspects of security;
- j) promoting security awareness, culture and vigilance;
- k) ensuring an effective response by the aircraft operator to any threat or security incident;
- l) initiating special security measures during periods of increased risk and/or for critical flights and routes (e.g. conflict zones);
- m) maintaining familiarity with applicable aviation security-related legislation and regulations in the States served by the aircraft operator;

- n) maintaining a record of all unauthorized weapons or suspect explosive devices detected on the aircraft operator's aircraft or on property used by the aircraft operator; and
- o) reporting all actual or suspected security occurrences (which may include security incidents or acts of unlawful interference) with aircraft operations to the appropriate authority. More information on reporting security occurrences and incidents can be found at the following address: <https://www.icao.int/Security/SFP/Pages/Incident-Reporting-Guidance-and-Taxonomy.aspx>.

1.3.4 Security managers should be provided with adequate technical and non-technical staff and other resources at the head office, regional offices and airports to ensure the effective implementation of security measures within all areas of operation.

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