

**59<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE OF  
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

*Cebu, Philippines  
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**AGENDA ITEM 3: AVIATION SAFETY**

**SHARING BEST PRACTICES - SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SMS)  
IMPLEMENTATION BY GROUND HANDLING SERVICE PROVIDERS (GHSPS)**

(Presented by India)

**INFORMATION PAPER**

**SUMMARY**

- Ground handling services form an integral part of the aviation system and contribute directly to flight and aerodrome safety
- “Ramp Safety” has been identified as one of the National-High Risk Categories (N-HRCs) of occurrences in National Aviation Safety Plan 2024-28.
- A study carried out by DGCA across the various GHSPs has revealed many gaps in the implementation of SMS by GHSPs.
- DGCA has issued detailed guidelines on “Safety Management System Implementation by Ground Handling Service Providers” as SSP Division Circular 02 of 2024.
- The circular also recommends establishing of “Ground operations safety committee” at each aerodrome.

## **SHARING BEST PRACTICES - SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION BY GROUND HANDLING SERVICE PROVIDERS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Ground handling services form an integral part of the aviation system and contribute directly to flight and aerodrome safety. Ground handling accidents and incidents have significant direct and indirect costs and cause major disruptions in aircraft operations. In addition, undetected or unreported errors when servicing the aircraft can affect its load and balance, aerodynamics, airworthiness or performance. These errors occur much less frequently, but their consequences can be catastrophic.

1.2 “Ramp Safety” has been identified as one of the National-High Risk Categories (N-HRCs) of occurrences in National Aviation Safety Plan 2024-28 and is being monitored and measured through a set of Safety Performance Indicators and Safety Performance Targets.

1.3 A Safety Management System (SMS) is a systematic and proactive approach to managing safety risks. SMS is a structured process that obligates organizations to manage safety with the same level of priority that other core business processes are managed.

1.4 Para 3.3.2 of ICAO Annex 19, Ed.2 requires State to mandates certain applicable service provider under their authority to implement an SMS. This does not include Ground Handling Service Providers (GHSPs). However, note 2 of appendix 2 of ICAO Annex 19 recognizes that service provider’s interfaces with other organizations can make a significant contribution to the safety of its products or services.

1.5 There are best industry practices in existence which are being followed by GHSPs for establishing their Safety Management System (SMS) which interfaces with the Safety Management System of other service providers taking services from them.

1.6 Para 1.4.4 of ICAO Doc 10121 recommends that SMS principles, combined with industry best practices, should be adopted by Ground Handling Service Providers (GHSPs).

1.7 The action item 58/4 of 58th Conference of DGCA-APAC *inter-alia* state that “encouraged States/Administrations, International Organizations, Industries and Safety Partners to share their best practices”.

1.8 A study carried out by DGCA across the various GHSPs has revealed many gaps in the implementation of SMS by GHSPs. For establishing effective SMS by GHSPs, DGCA has issued detailed guidelines on “Safety Management System Implementation by Ground Handling Service Providers” as SSP Division Circular 02 of 2024. This is available on DGCA website (link: <https://www.dgca.gov.in/digigov-portal/?dynamicPage=dynamicPdf/UmvUi%2Bvx7jWlOrZycb%2B8A%3D%3D&maincircularesRulesStateSafetyProg/7/3316/viewDynamicRuleContLv12>).

### **2. DISCUSSION**

2.1 Considering the impact of ground collisions on aviation safety, India has identified “Ramp Safety” as one of the National-High Risk Categories (N-HRCs) of occurrences in National Aviation Safety Plan 2024-28 and is being monitored through following Safety Performance Indicators(SPIs):

- 2.1.1 Number of ramp incidents that result in damage to aircraft, vehicles or loss of life/ serious injury to personnel per 10,00,000 movements
- 2.1.2 Number of ramp collisions involving aircraft due to non-adherence to SOPs per 10,00,000 movements
- 2.1.3 Number of ramp collision involving aircraft due to supervisory lapse per 10,00,000 movements
- 2.1.4 Number of airports having apron safety team

2.2 The performance of NASP is measured on annual basis and is published as Annual Safety Review. Annual Safety Review 2023 has identified that the SPI at 2.1.1 has not met the target.

2.3 To identify the gaps for not meeting the target, a study was carried out across all the GHSPs operating in India. Among other factors, study has found gaps in implementation of SMS by GHSPs. Though there are best industry practises in existence for GHSPs to establish SMS, however they do not provide complete guidance.

2.3.1 DGCA has issued detailed guidelines on “Safety Management System Implementation by Ground Handling Service Providers” as SSP Division Circular 02 of 2024 which covers the areas such as Scalability, Establishment of Safety Committee by GHSPs, Safety Performance Monitoring and Measurement, etc.

2.3.2 To facilitate sharing of safety information, identification hazards and their mitigation, circular recommends establishing of “Ground operations safety committee” at each aerodrome comprising of all the relevant stakeholders. This would promote the safety of ground handling operations within the aerodrome and across the aerodromes.

2.3.3 To monitor the effectiveness of measure Ground operations safety committee, “Number of airports having apron safety team” has been included as SPI in NASP 2024-28.

### **3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE**

3.1 The Conference is invited to note the information contained in this Paper.

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