

**59th CONFERENCE OF
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ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

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AGENDA ITEM 3: AVIATION SAFETY

EFFECTIVE SAFETY PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION

(Presented by EASA)

SUMMARY

While there are 4 components to SMS that are laid out in ICAO Annex 19, for most authorities and aviation organisations the pillar on safety promotion is the most difficult to implement effectively. It is the part that is the least defined and also the least audited – this naturally draws focus on the other 3 components that are much more established in our aviation processes.

However, without effective communication and promotion our other safety efforts are less likely to be understood and to drive safe operations in the aviation industry. This paper proposes an effective approach to safety promotion.

EFFECTIVE SAFETY PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ICAO Annex 19 defines the 4 components of safety management. These are Safety Policy, Safety Risk Management, Safety Assurance and finally Safety Promotion. A great deal of effort and resource is invested in the first 3 components through rulemaking, procedures, safety reporting, safety analysis and audit and compliance activities. These activities have been long established in the aviation industry and authorities are themselves audited on these areas by ICAO.

1.2 These safety efforts will not be able to achieve their full objectives without effective communication to organisations and ultimately to the individual workers the aviation system relies on to deliver safe operations. However, the safety promotion effort is often under-resourced. The challenge is how to redress the imbalance in terms of effort and resources that is put into safety promotion at both authorities and organisations.

1.3 Based on the experience of EASA, as well as other authorities and other organisations, this paper outlines an approach to effective safety promotion.

2. DISCUSSION

Defining Safety Promotion

2.1 ICAO Annex 19 requires states to promote safety awareness and the sharing and exchange of safety information with their aviation community to foster the maintenance and improvement of safety and to support the development of a positive safety culture.

2.2 Annex 19 also defines the safety promotion element of an SMS as consisting of two parts. The first is training and education – specifically around the individual’s role in the SMS. The second is safety communication to ensure they are aware of the SMS and provided with relevant safety critical information, awareness on why particular actions are taken to improve safety and why safety procedures have been introduced or changed.

2.3 The challenge for authorities or organisations is to tailor their safety promotion so that it can actually have a positive impact on safety. In today’s modern, connected world the aviation workforce are continually bombarded with news, information and other material and our safety messages have to compete with this. This means there is a need for new and continually evolving approaches to safety promotion in order to get people’s attention focused on the right information, in the right way at the right time.

2.4 A more practical definition of safety promotion is that it is a set of activities that aim to engage people in positive conversations about safety and get people thinking about how they act in daily operations and activities.

Choosing What to Promote

2.5 Before starting to do any actual safety promotion, it is first important to decide which safety topics or subjects need to be promoted. This should be driven by the safety priorities and policies of the authority or organisation. Safety promotion should focus on 4 specific types of information:

2.5.1 The first type of safety promotion is designed to make people aware of their role in ensuring aviation safety. This is specifically linked to their daily role in the SMS itself.

2.5.2 The second is information on key safety risks and issues, so that people are aware of important safety problems and how to act in specific situations. The topics to be promoted should be determined from the safety risk management element of the SMS, thus promoting the topics that pose the greatest safety risks and for which safety promotion is the most effective mitigation.

2.5.3 The third is information about new or amended rules, processes or procedures so that staff understand what has changed, the reasons why and what this means for their daily work/ activities.

2.5.4 The fourth is specific information on crisis situations or relating to other immediate safety actions that are taken following accidents, occurrences and other risk management activities.

The Safety Promotion Process

2.6 Developing effective safety promotion material can be achieved using a 4-step process. This process is based on the theory of modern marketing and corporate storytelling applied to the aviation safety environment.

2.7 *Step 1 – Audience.* Define and understand the needs of the audience. At this first step it is important to consider the type of safety promotion you are performing. Describe clearly the safety problem you are trying to solve and how you want the audience’s behaviour to transform from the start of the promotion to the end (where are they now to where you want them to be). Then identify what you want them to know, how you want them to feel and what you want them to actually do differently to achieve that change or transformation. (This can be summarised as Know-Feel-Do). It might be that you have more than one audience to reach with a particular message who might need different information, messages or approaches. It is important to establish this at this stage.

2.8 *Step 2 – Content Creation.* Identify what types of safety promotion material/ content you need to create to get the messages across to the audience/s you have defined. You should aim to develop a range of content that is clear, engaging and interesting with different amounts of detail to serve different purposes in your “safety promotion funnel”. The funnel approach described below is based on the theory of marketing and ensures that safety messages are delivered in a way that matches the audience’s level of interest and need for detail, gradually leading them from awareness to action. Depending on the level of technical nature of the topic you may only need the top two parts of the funnel.

2.8.1 *Top of funnel – attracting attention.* This features clear messages with simple and, where possible, very visual and inspiring content that really gets the audience engaged on the topics. This content includes social media (images and post text), verbal briefings and direct person to person comms (e.g. at audits/ physical meetings/ touch points), email marketing and branded goods.

2.8.2 *Middle of funnel – providing solutions.* This part of the safety promotion funnel gives more detailed information on both the safety topic and the solutions/ behaviour change that you are trying to achieve. This includes content such as website articles and news items, press releases, events, conferences and webinars, explainer videos and podcasts/ videocasts.

2.8.3 *Bottom of funnel – delivering information and explaining how.* At the bottom of the funnel is the most detailed information that provides the full technical information that your audience needs to drive specific safety change. This includes rules, guides, technical reports and other official publications.

2.9 *Step 3 – Marketing and outreach.* Once the content and safety promotion material has been made, this third step in the process then deploys that to the audience. There are various ways in which that outreach can take place.

2.9.1 *Events and other person-to-person outreach.* Some of the best outreach of safety promotion material is done in person. The most common ways to do this are through physical events, trade shows and conferences. However, the improvement in technology triggered by the COVID pandemic has made it much easier to host webinars and reach audiences around the world if needed. It is also useful to use audits and other in person interactions to promote safety.

2.9.2 *Social Media.* There are lots of ways to use social media for safety promotion, but it is important to understand the best social media platform for your audience and message. This will also vary by country – you may have a local equivalent service which is better known than the social media that are standard for Europe. From a European perspective, technical audiences in the commercial industry are normally best reached through LinkedIn and from a strategic perspective, also through X. For the general public and private pilots, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok are the most effective. It is also useful to host longer video content on YouTube or other video platforms.

2.9.3 *Other types of outreach.* Finally, there are other methods of outreach that can be considered for safety promotion activity. One key method is via email marketing. This is especially effective when linked to your organisation’s website so that users can register and select the domains and activities on which they would like to receive emails and updates.

2.10 *Step 4 – Reviewing success and performance improvement.* The final part of the safety promotion process is to review your safety promotion activity to see how effective it was at reaching the intended audience and ultimately, over time, how it helped to mitigate the safety risk identified at the start of the process. While it is difficult to measure the link between promotion and improvement in safety, it is possible at least to use social media, email and web statistics to identify the percentage of your audience that have been reached by the content that was created.

Other Considerations and Requirements for Effective Safety Promotion

2.11 *Organisational buy-in and support.* Like any other organisational initiative, the success of safety promotion relies on buy-in and support. It is most important that all communications on topics chosen for safety promotion are aligned across the organisation. Different parts of the organisation should avoid promoting different messages on the same topic.

2.12 *Staff skills.* Safety promotion is a specific activity that requires dedicated resources, skills and training. Particularly, you will either need to have staff who are able to plan and develop the different content types that you plan to use to promote safety or to have access to the people with the specific skills you need through external contracted support. This could include storytellers, writers, graphic designers, videographers, web designers and social media experts.

2.13 *Tools and equipment.* Finally, it is important to have the necessary tools and equipment to make safety promotion content. Modern IT tools mean it is much easier to make safety promotion inside the organisation at minimal costs. IT tools such as Adobe Creative Cloud, Canva and Capcut are very effective to create videos and visual content. In terms of equipment, it is useful to have cameras, video equipment and lights to use for videos. If this investment is not possible, you can make decent video content with a reasonable quality mobile phone, providing you get the sound level and lighting right.

2.14 *Less is more.* People have short attention spans. Keep your content as interesting and succinct as possible. Reflect on your own behaviours. You probably do not watch unattractive or boring videos for longer than 10-15 seconds. Your audience is just like you! People are more likely to watch a short video than a long one, and more likely to stick with it if they understand the structure in advance and so know what they are committing to watching. Let them plan their time: “There are three important points. One...two... three...Thanks for listening!”

What Can be Achieved Through Effective Promotion?

2.15 By taking a more strategic and proactive approach to safety promotion you will reinforce the fourth pillar of your SMS. Communicating clearly and effectively to organisations, the front-line aviation workforce and the general public helps people to do things differently, thus driving safety improvements. Safety promotion is particularly important in helping industry to understanding and implementing changes to ICAO SARPS and national rules.

2.16 As a final note for authorities, when there is a need to promote safety to the front-line workforce, it is important to do this with the involvement of the safety and compliance teams of the organisation. This is to ensure that any specific actions are set in the context of the organisation's safety policy and procedures.

2.17 EASA will implement an EU-Asia Pacific workshop on Safety Promotion on 19-21 November 2024 in Singapore, to which the Conference is invited. This aims to develop a network between Asia Pacific and European regulators to share practical tools and strategies. The registration link can be found [here](#). There is no registration fee.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) Identify and address the specific challenges that authorities may face in effectively implementing the safety promotion component of Annex 19.
- b) Develop guidelines for selecting which safety topics should be prioritised for promotion, ensuring that safety promotion efforts are closely aligned with identified safety risks and overarching safety policies.
- c) Propose methods for measuring the effectiveness of safety promotion activities, such as web analytics, social media engagement, and other metrics to assess how well safety messages are reaching and influencing the intended audience.
- d) Emphasise the importance of securing organisational buy-in for safety promotion initiatives, ensuring that sufficient resources, skilled personnel, and appropriate tools are available to support effective safety promotion.

— END —

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[EASA SAFETY PROMOTION WORKSHOP PRESENTATION](#)