

Synopsis

Relations between investigation bodies and oversight authorities

The roles of the DAST and the DCS within the French civil aviation authority (DGAC) are, respectively, to prepare technical regulations and to check on application of the safety and security regulations. This involves ensuring that aircraft are correctly designed, manufactured, operated and maintained, that air operators are properly organized, that crews, controllers and mechanics are properly educated and trained, that aerodromes are safe to use and that air traffic control services meet the required safety standards.

In France, the BEA is the official organization responsible for technical investigations (as defined by ICAO) into civil aviation accidents and incidents. The sole objective of these investigations is to improve safety. To do this, it must identify the circumstances of the accident or incident, determine the causes thereof and where necessary make recommendations aimed at preventing similar accidents.

Though the investigative process is, and must remain, independent of the areas of regulation and oversight, the BEA and the DGAC work towards the common objective of civil aviation safety. Thus a good working relationship between the two organisations is essential, while in no way jeopardising the independence of the safety investigation.

Within the context of its mission, the BEA informs the DGAC, manufacturers and operators of the progress of its investigations. The formal procedure that allows it to point out safety problems that, according to the BEA, require corrective action, is based on safety recommendations.

Recommendations can be issued at any stage as the investigation progresses. They are generally included in the investigation report (in chapter 4 according to the international model). The DGAC has procedures in place to evaluate the recommendations and take the necessary action. During evaluation, it considers the means, the methods and the possible consequences associated with the implementation of the recommendations, in consultation where necessary with other regulatory authorities such as the EASA, the JAA or ICAO.

The EASA was established in September 2003, with a mandate that currently covers aspects of airworthiness related to the design and production of aircraft. Working relations comparable to those that exist with the DGAC are being established between the BEA and the European agency.