



**WORKING PAPER**

**ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION**

**TECHNICAL COMMISSION**

**Agenda Item 33: Other issues to be considered by the Technical Commission**

**SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL TRAINING IN AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT INVESTIGATION FOR MEMBERS OF RESCUE AND FIRE FIGHTING (RFF) SERVICES**

(Presented by Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and supported by Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Panama and the Dominican Republic<sup>2</sup>)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In this working paper, the Venezuelan State presents the initiative designed to develop specialized technical training programmes on accident investigation for members of Rescue and Firefighting (RFF) Services in response to the ever-growing demand for quality and expertise in preliminary aircraft accident investigation tasks. Specialized training is an appropriate response to objectives relating to the continuous enhancement of safety.

The Rescue and Firefighting Service is generally the first to act in response to an aircraft accident. As a primary emergency-response unit, there is a very high probability that it will observe and gather the first items of evidence from the site of the event and, depending on the characteristics of the event and the place in which it has occurred, rescue teams can witness the very last stages of the accident. This affords them a great opportunity to note and transmit first hand to investigators the exact details and facts that can contribute effectively to an investigation and, consequently, to the determination of the causes of the accident. For that reason, training of RFF staff as investigators is relevant and necessary in ensuring safety.

**Action:** The Assembly is invited to:

- a) take note of the information presented herein; and
- b) examine the relevance of training RFF technical staff to be accident investigators as an effective strategy in support of aircraft accident investigation work.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency Strategic Objective.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	Not applicable
<i>References:</i>	Annex 13 – <i>Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation</i> Annex 14 – <i>Aerodromes</i> Annex 19 – <i>Safety Management</i> Doc 9137, <i>Airport Services Manual</i>

<sup>1</sup> Spanish version provided by Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

<sup>2</sup> Member States of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The most dangerous phases of a flight are landing and take-off, and this has actually been borne out by statistics. On the basis of this hard fact, it can also be said that firefighters of the Airport Rescue and Firefighting (RFF) Service are statistically the first to arrive at the scene of an accident, which implies that firefighters have the first option on observing a completely untouched scene, which is an aspect of great importance to the investigation. It is therefore very important to train aviation firefighters in aircraft accident and incident investigation techniques in order to draw on their contribution in this process.

1.2 On approaching and reaching the site of the air accident, firefighters can observe and take photographs or make videos to preserve important evidence for the investigation, but if this is to be feasible and efficient, firefighters must be trained technically in aircraft accident and incident investigation fieldwork so that they know what is expected of them at this crucial stage of the investigation.

1.3 Firefighters trained as air accident and incident investigators can make a great difference between a smooth investigation and an investigation process that is complicated and more costly than usual. Accordingly, if RFF Services develop an investigative firefighter training programme, several firefighters would be more experienced and duly trained in aircraft accident investigation.

1.4 In the context of the attention paid by RFF Services to emergencies at or outside the airport, aviation firefighters' knowledge of aircraft accident investigation techniques is most useful and builds trust in the appointed investigator who realises that the initial procedures and expert appraisals have been carried out in strict accordance with ICAO-recommended protocols.

## 2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The International Civil Aviation Organization has, in the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARP) set out in Annex 13 – *Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation*, and in Doc 9756 – *Manual of Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation*, Part I, Chapter 5, Action at the Accident Site, made recommendations on the first steps to be taken by firefighters on arrival at an air accident scene in order to gather trustworthy and reliable information at the time as evidence that must be preserved pending the arrival of the investigating commission.

2.2 It is therefore considered that firefighters must know which courses of action must be taken for efficient task performance that really contribute to the investigation process; they, too, must be included in the training provided.

## 3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Airport firefighters have, from the very beginning, provided basic support for aircraft accident and incident investigation commissions. As RFF services are generally the first to arrive at the scene of the accident or incident; they are key to the collection of first-hand information and to preserving the accident site untouched as much as possible, hence the importance of aviation firefighters being sufficiently trained to demonstrate competence in aircraft accident and incident investigation, as this can decisively affect the propriety and timeliness of investigation outcomes.

3.2 It is agreed that firefighters who investigate aircraft accidents and incidents should know and master the following technical aspects:

- a) adequate mastery of the national and international legal framework for aircraft accidents and incidents investigation;
- b) recognition of prevention of future accidents and incidents as the sole purpose of any aircraft accidents and incidents investigation;
- c) an understanding of air accidents as evidence of existing aviation hazards or flaws. A well conducted investigation must point to the immediate causes of the accident and deficiencies inherent systemic; and
- d) knowledge and application of ICAO-recommended measures on arrival at the site of the accident or incident.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

4.1 In this working paper, the Venezuelan State discusses the importance of providing technical training in aircraft accident and incidents investigation to aviation firefighters as a means of technically supporting preliminary investigation work, inasmuch as RFF personnel are precisely the ones who generally arrive first on the scene of a disaster and who, by working in a timely and professional manner, guarantee the veracity and validity of the evidence at the site of the event.

4.2 Accordingly, this initiative is presented to the authorities, with the added value that the Rescue and Firefighting Services can provide with regard to investigation, safety and air accident prevention.

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