

SYSTEM OF AVIATION ACCIDENT & INCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS IN SURINAME



BRIAN DE SOUZA
DIRECTOR AG.
CIVIL AVIATION SAFETY AUTHORITY SURINAME



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BRIEF HISTORY

Suriname was a former colony of the Kingdom of the Netherlands up to the 25th of November 1975. Due to this the then existing aviation requirements were based on the Dutch Aviation requirements .

As an independent country, Suriname continued to implement the Aviation Laws & Regulations which were based on the “old Dutch” aviation requirements. The problem was that these requirements were not updated to existing ICAO standards.

As a result of some Accidents and Incidents that occurred in the latter part of the 1980's involving Non US certified Operators, the Federal Aviation Administration of the United States of North America was mandated by the US Senate to evaluate the level of safety oversight of Civil Aviation of the various countries that had operators conducting flights in to US territories.



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As the Civil Aviation Laws and Regulations were way outdated and there for not in compliance with International Standards, the FAA in 1996 categorized Suriname in the at that time still existing Category 3.

The FAA recognizing the main problem that existed in many of these former “colonies”, established the so-called Model Civil Aviation Regulations or MCARS.

Together with the assistance of the FAA, Suriname adopted these regulations and after a re-assessment by the IASA team of the FAA was categorized in to CAT 1 in 2003.

Presently, the Civil Aviation Regulations of Suriname (CARS), consist of 20 Parts of which CARS Part 14 contains the requirements for the investigation of Accidents & Incidents.

I am pretty certain that the events mentioned before are very familiar to many of the South American States who are all former colonies of one or another European State.



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In the “old” Dutch system, the Attorney General was responsible for the conduct of aircraft accident investigations. This system was maintained by the Lawmakers and is currently still in force.



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AIG INFRASTRUCTURE.

When notification of an accident is received, the Attorney General will then form an investigation committee consisting of members of various entities. These entities normally include the Police, CASAS inspectors (usually 1 Airworthiness - & 1 Flight Ops inspector, the Medical Assessor

As this process is a time consuming one (*the appointment of the committee members has to be done by means of a Decree issued by the Minister responsible Justice & Police*), the CASAS is responsible for the initial on-start of the investigation.

Besides the gathering of as much as information as possible (Maintenance records/Pilot records/Dispatch records etc.) , this includes sending the various notifications to the various states as i.a.w. the requirements of Part 14 of the Civil Aviation Regulations of Suriname.

The CASAS is also responsible for the initial conduct of the on-site investigation.



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It must be noted that within the committee formed by the Attorney General , the CASAS inspectors are the only members who have received training in the field of Aircraft Accident & Incident investigations.

AIG REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE MATERIAL

As noted the Civil Aviation Regulations of Suriname (CARS) consist of 20 Parts of which CARS Part 14 contains the requirements for Accident & incident investigations. These requirements are based on the Standards contained in Annex 13 of the Convention.

For the purpose of conducting these investigations, the CASAS compiled an “Accident & Incident Policies & Procedures Manual. This document provides guidance to the CASAS organization on how to deal with and investigating such occurrences. This document also includes checklists and sample notification letters.

The CASAS “Accident & Incident Policies & Procedures Manual” includes the training and experience requirements for investigators and also lists the contents and location of the equipment to be utilized by investigators during the conduct of investigations.



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COMMUNICATIONS

General communication is primarily conducted utilizing telephone/cellular/fax/e-mail while on-site communication is provided by means of portable two-way communications transceivers.

PERSONNEL & TRAINING PROGRAMS

As mentioned before, the CASAS conducts the preliminary investigation of aircraft accidents and incidents. I.a.w. the training requirements of our Inspector Training System, all Airworthiness and Flight Ops Inspectors shall receive Accident & Incident Investigation training conducted by the FAA under course no. 00035 or equivalent such as training conducted by the NTSB or other approved facility such as the University of Southern California or the Singapore Aviation Academy.

Presently our organization has 1 Flight ops and 2 Airworthiness Inspectors who have received formal Accident & Incident Investigation Training.

No training in the field of Accident & Incident Investigation is provided in Suriname .



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PERSONNEL & TRAINING PROGRAMS cont'd

Training in this field is primarily accomplished in the USA .

With the assistance of the Trinidad & Tobago Civil Aviation Authority, the University of Southern California has and still conducts training in this field however this is done on an incidental basis.

FUNDING

The preliminary phase of the investigation of Accidents which is conducted by the CASAS, is funded out of our own funds which are primarily generated out of the passenger safety fee imposed on each passenger ticket for all international departures from Suriname.



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MAIN DIFFICULTIES & NEEDS

I. **Difficulties**

The main difficulties experienced during the conduct of investigations conducted by the committee appointed by the Attorney General are:

- a) The fact that the investigation is considered to be more a judicial type of investigation with the main intent being to apportion blame.
- b) The lack of experience in the aviation industry of the greater part of its members
- c) The lack of training in Aviation Accident Investigation techniques by the greater part of its members
- d) The funding of the investigation conducted by the committee. *(due to the fact that funding has to be approved by the Government, the investigation takes a lot longer with the major chance of loss of evidence)*
- e) The publication of the final report.



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MAIN DIFFICULTIES & NEEDS cont'd

II NEEDS

The “Needs” presently required in the Suriname situation can be simply summarized as follows:

*The establishment of an **Independent*** Investigation Board consisting of members who have received formal training and who have gained experience in the field of Aircraft Accident Investigation.*

**This Board must also be financially independent on the Government for its functioning.*



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AVAILABILITY OF MECHANISMS OF COOPERATION

Suriname a nation located on the main land of the South-American continent is a member of the Caribbean Aviation Safety & Security Oversight System (CASSOS). Through this regional organization, access to expertise in the various fields of aviation is available to all its member nations.

The CASSOS has established a so called “Accident Investigation Go Team” consisting of qualified inspectors of the Civil Aviation Authorities of its member states. When an accident occurs in the region the office of the CASSOS Coordinator can be contacted who will then ensure that an appropriate “Go-Team” is dispatched at the most soonest opportunity. This Go-Team will provide assistance to each member state during the conduct of the investigation for as long as required.



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VISION REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL ACCIDENT & INCIDENT INVESTIGATION ORGANIZATION.

In general, the establishment of a RAIO will be a development that will be a solution to the Suriname situation. (establishment of an Independent investigation Board)

Challenges to such an organization will be:

- a) The legalization of such an organization by the various member states
(Amendment of the Aviation Act/Sovereignty issues)
- b) The funding of such an organization (Member State fees)
- c) Composition (Language barriers)
