

THE UK CONFIDENTIAL HUMAN FACTORS INCIDENT REPORTING PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION

Accident/incident rates in commercial air transport operations are extremely low; however the number of accidents with Human Factors causes has not declined at the same rate and thus has become the dominant cause in major accidents.

Incident reporting programmes have proved to be valuable tools in the identification of safety related issues and the definition of corrective actions. The availability of an independent, voluntary, confidential reporting medium has provided valuable additional information to that available through formal or mandatory reporting systems.

THE CHIRP CHARITABLE TRUST

The UK Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme, more commonly known by the acronym CHIRP, has been operating since 1982. In 1996 the Programme was restructured to enable it to make a more effective contribution to the resolution of important safety related issues in the UK air transport industry.

A charitable company limited by guarantee was established on 1 November 1996. This corporate structure was selected in order to provide a totally independent organisation, with management and fiscal responsibilities held by an independent Board of Trustees. The Programme is funded by the Civil Aviation Authority, which in turn is funded by the air transport industry.

The current Board of Trustees comprises 9 independent members and 5 members, who are appointed on an ex-officio basis. The Chairman is Mr Ken Smart, who before his retirement held the post of Chief Inspector of Air Accidents. The remaining Trustees are:

Mr Peter Cardy	Chief Executive MCA
Captain David Chapman	Head Operating Standards CAA
Captain Clive Elton	Independent
Captain Chris Hodgkinson	GAPAN
Captain John Hughes	Independent
Mr David King	Chief Inspector AAIB
Captain Jock Lowe	Independent
Rear Admiral Stephen Meyer	Chief Inspector MAIB
Captain Nigel Palmer	Independent
Air Cdre Rick Peacock-Edwards	Independent
Mr John Saull	Independent
Captain Tim Sindall	Independent
Mr Philip Wake	The Nautical Institute

The Trustees together with 18 nominees from the principal air transport interests in the UK comprise the Air Transport Advisory Board. Current nominees are:

Captain M Alder	British Air Line Pilots Association
Mr J Batty	British Business & GA Aircraft Assn
Captain E Bewley	Head Flight Ops Inspectorate (1) CAA (SRG)
Mr R Bradbury	Guild of Air Traffic Control Officers
Mr C Brown	British Airways Engineering
Captain A Davis	British Helicopter Advisory Board
Air Commodore I Dugmore	Director MoD Aviation Regn & Safety Gp
Dr S Evans	Chief Medical Officer CAA
Mr C Hague	Society of British Aerospace Companies
Captain D Harrison	Independent
Mr S Lindsey	Head Operational Safety Performance NATS
Captain L Jordan	Manager Flight Op Safety & Stds easyJet
Mr P Lowrence	Safety Investigation Data CAA (SRG)
Mr J McKenna	Head of Strategy, Policy and Standards for Airworthiness Division CAA (SRG)
Mr M Newman	Assoc Licensed Aircraft Engineers
Captain E Paintin	UK Flight Safety Committee
Captain R Screen	Flight Operations Liaison Group
Mr A Shaw	Director Highlands & Islands Airport Auty
Captain T Sindall	Independent
Captain S Solomon	Flight Operations Director MyTravel/FOLG

The role of the Advisory Boards are to provide counsel on the most appropriate way in which specific issues might be resolved and to advise the Trustees on the performance of the Programme. The composition of the Boards is reviewed regularly to ensure that the membership is appropriate to the scope of the Programme. Advisory Board members act as individual expert advisers and not as representatives of their sponsoring organisations. Information is provided to the Advisory Boards on a confidential basis and all

means of identifying the individual reporter are removed from reports prior to any discussion.

CHIRP employs a permanent staff of four under the management of a full-time Director, Mr Peter Tait. The organisation is located on the QinetiQ (formerly DERA) Site at Farnborough.

A separate General Aviation Advisory Board assists with GA reports. Current nominees are:

Captain A Robinson	Chairman
Mr P Barker	Helicopter Club of Great Britain
Mr J Broad	Light Aircraft Association
Mr J Brownlow	Independent
Mr D Cockburn	Editor - GASIL, Civil Aviation Authority
Captain C Elton	Independent
Mr K Fairbank	Air Accidents Investigation Branch
Captain R Felix	Independent
Mr M Gunston	British Balloon & Airship Club
Mr G Hackemer	General Aviation Safety Council
Mr K Mitchell	Guild ATC Officers
Mr B Penfold	British Gliding Association
Mr A Sephton	The Shuttleworth Collection
Mr J Stewart-Smith	Independent
Mr G Weighell	British Microlight Aircraft Association

THE PROGRAMME

CHIRP currently receives confidential incident reports from professionally licensed pilots, air traffic controllers, licensed engineers and approved maintenance organisations employed within the UK air transport industry. The GA Programme is available to all GA communities. The Programme is also available to Design and Production organisation all Cabin Crewmembers. A Cabin Crew Advisory Board has been formed to assist in this initiative.

On being received, reports are validated as far as is possible and reviewed with the objective of making the information as widely available as possible whilst maintaining the confidentiality of the source. Anonymous reports are not normally acted upon as they cannot be validated. When appropriate, report information is discussed with relevant agencies with the aim of finding a resolution. Only depersonalised data are used in discussions with third party organisations and the confidentiality of the reporter is assured in any contact with an external organisation.

No personal details are retained from reports received. After ensuring that the report contains all relevant information, all personal details are returned to the reporter with an acknowledgement letter. Each report is allocated a unique reference identification. After the return of personal details, CHIRP is unable subsequently to contact the reporter. The reporter may, if he/she wishes, contact the CHIRP office for additional information by using the report reference identification.

A newsletter FEEDBACK, covering current topics from disidentified reports and including new report forms, is sent four times a year to all commercially licensed pilots, air traffic controllers and engineering personnel, a circulation of around 30,000. Some reports are disidentified further (e.g. time and place, company, reporter's gender) before being published in FEEDBACK, or making any data available to other agencies. FEEDBACK maintains an awareness of Human Factors issues among the flying, air traffic controller and aircraft maintenance communities and provides a forum for discussion. A separate newsheet, entitled GA FEEDBACK and containing reports of particular interest to light aircraft operations/leisure flying is distributed to the General Aviation communities.

Depersonalised data are recorded in a secure database at Farnborough for analysis of key topics and trends. Disidentified data are made available to other safety systems and professional bodies.

For more information on the Programme, contact:

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