

The ACSF Industry Audit Standard – An Evaluation Tool For SMS



Safety Management Systems (SMS) provide a foundation to organize safety through planning, goal setting, training, program implementation, and performance measurement.

Many operators are in the early stages of SMS implementation. The Air Charter Safety Foundation (ACSF) strongly encourages all operators to adopt these programs and participate in an independent evaluation of the SMS.

How Long Will Implementing My SMS Take?

There is no quick way to create an SMS. Major airlines and several air charter operators have invested years in their SMS development. At this time, the highest known verified SMS level reached by a U.S. operator is Level 2. You should anticipate achieving SMS Level 1 in one/two year with a concerted effort.

Do Audits Create My SMS?

No. There is some confusion about the role audits play in SMS development. The ACSF Industry Audit Standard (IAS) is a tool that evaluates an SMS on four maturity levels that correspond to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) SMS Framework. Each level details several sequential components that an operator must complete in order to have a fully implemented and functional SMS process. Additionally, the IAS concurrently evaluates an operator's regulatory compliance with on-demand and/or fractional ownership regulations.

Where Can I Get Assistance In Developing My SMS?

Operators establishing an SMS program should be wary of any vendor selling an "off-the-shelf" or "SMS-in-a-box" type product. An SMS is an individualized program specific to your business and operations. Audits, including the IAS, do not create or implement your SMS - **they evaluate your SMS.**

ACSF offers numerous SMS development resources on our Web site at www.acsf.aero/sms. A special discount for ACSF members purchasing the NATA Safety 1st Management System for Air Operators is also available; however, there are numerous consultants and organizations that offer services to help you develop and implement an SMS.

Why Should I Have ACSF Audit My Operations & SMS?

- Customers seek out operators that have had their safety and regulatory compliance independently evaluated, and the IAS accomplishes both types of evaluations in one audit.
- The ACSF is a non-profit entity dedicated to improving the safety and security of the industry. As such, we developed our audit standards with the input of consumers, insurers, auditors and operators.
- Independent verification of your SMS is considered an integral part of the process, similar to the audits of quality management programs common in many other industries.
- When SMS programs are required by government (as they are likely to be in the U.S. and internationally in the near future), third-party validation is likely to be a component of compliance. The IAS was developed to comply with existing FAA and international SMS standards and guidance.
- ACSF wants you to be prepared for our audit so you may become an IAS Registered Operator. To achieve this, we approach audits like no one else – each operator seeking the IAS must first complete our pre-audit checklist to understand the criteria that will be used during their IAS evaluation. This allows operators to determine in advance their ability to achieve IAS Registered Operator status successfully and immediately begin addressing any findings.
- ACSF requires our Registered Operators to pursue a path of continuous improvement. Operators that have attained an audited Level 1, 2, or 3 SMS status must progress to the next sequential level on the following audit in order to retain IAS Registered Operator status.



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Through research, collaboration and education, the Air Charter Safety Foundation advances charter and shared aircraft ownership industry standards and best practices; promulgates safety, security and service benchmarks; and promotes the universal acceptance of safety management systems.