

# THE BRUSSELS AIRPORT LOCAL RUNWAY SAFETY TEAM: **COLLABORATION AT WORK**

Safety problems usually look very different from behind a desk, compared to when out in the field. Safety problems are also perceived and understood differently by different people with different roles, goals and needs. In this article, **Davy Van Hyfte** recounts practical approaches to collaborating for safety at Brussels Airport.



Davy Van Hyfte started his aviation career as a military air traffic controller. He gained experience as a Tower, Approach and Area controller and participated in overseas missions too. He is now Head of Operations Compliance & Certification Unit and nominated Safety Manager at Brussels Airport, and is involved in auditing, incident investigation and human factors.



## KEY POINTS

1. When safety problems occur, wherever possible, multi-disciplinary teams should go out together to observe the situation, including the field experts involved (e.g., drivers, controllers).
2. Roundtable discussions with mixed groups can help to understand each other's respective goals and needs, and bring new insights and understandings.
3. Simulated reconstruction can be useful to help develop shared understandings of problems.
4. Multi-disciplinary groups should be involved in co-designing solutions.



The day after my appointment as Safety Manager, I was asked by the Director of Operations what my ultimate achievement would be over the years. I could have picked many aspects from the broad SMS domain and for sure I could have answered that I would want to see continuous improvement of the level of safety in our KPI's applicable to safety at our airport.

This would be an answer from the book, when you would have a paper-based safety management system in place.

What my ultimate achievement would be is that business line owners, project managers or change leaders would contact the experts of the Safety Management Cell themselves and ask for a compliance review, or ask for support in drawing up a hazard identification and risk assessment. When operational leaders would contact us

and ask to conduct an audit, ask to perform an investigation to identify the causes of process failures, discontinuity, and incidents. When operational staff, vehicle drivers on the manoeuvring area, wildlife controllers, ATCO's, and pilots would contact us expressing their concerns and suggestions. Or when they would ask for refresher training when feeling unsure, or tell us about discrepancies between theory of rulemaking and practical day-to-day issues.

Am I dreaming? I don't know. But what I see is that when you bring in safety management activities from this perspective, you avoid 'safety' being seen as something 'mandatory'; something relating to people who just come in and say how things should not be done but then do not say how it would be possible to improve. We wanted to avoid this way of working,

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That being said, let's look at a real example. We received feedback from vehicle drivers from the maintenance department that, while approaching the stopbar on TWY C6 from Z, the holding position and stopbar is sometimes difficult to see in the turn. When they conduct a follow-me for their subcontractor convoy vehicle drivers, they must be focussed on applying correct phraseology with the tower, stay aware of what is going on around

them, and look after the convoy vehicle drivers. The limited visibility in the turn, amongst all these activities, can sometimes lead to late identification of the position they need to hold.

At the same place, we suffered some runway incursions (all ICAO CAT D classification) where aircrew crossed the holding position with stopbars illuminated, without being authorised, but nevertheless stopped some metres behind the holding position, without entering the runway itself. And next to the TWY C6 we had a TWY C5 giving entrance to the crossing of RWY's 01/19 and 07R/25L.

These observations and concerns were brought together and the Safety Cell invited members of the Local Runway Safety Team to go out and have a visual observation of the situation. Vehicle drivers were consulted and with them a reconstruction was simulated. Having in mind EASA Certification Specifications and Guidance Material for Aerodromes Design, we started to work in a multi-disciplinary group to work on infrastructural mitigation for this hotspot.

We decided together to define TWY C5 as a no entry taxiway and add to both C5 and C6 additional elevated stopbars and additional markings. The additional pair of elevated stopbar lights was turned slightly into the turn coming from Z to more easily identify this holding position. To the TWY centrelines leading to the holding positions of C5 and C6, we added the TWY enhanced centreline markings and mandatory instruction markings. This effort was intended to enhance visual identification of the named holding positions for both pilots and vehicle drivers.

Another collaborative initiative we organised brought people of the infrastructural department (both electro-mechanics, maintenance and construction) around the table with aerodrome operations staff, air traffic controllers and representatives of the safety management cell. The goal was to clarify terminology and definitions used within the framework of organising aerodrome works. All partners were asked to explain their insights, their respective goals and needs. Quite rapidly the aim of this initiative was met. People confirmed misunderstandings

and people started to say: "Ah, now I understand why you always ask this to me." "Ah, now I know why I need to call in works beforehand and need to ask for an end-of works inspection." "Yes, now I understand how limitations imposed by LVP have their effect."

Having ended two sessions now on this topic, people feel better understood again and have a better understanding of what other stakeholders require to be successful in their job and stay safe. The results of this effort are reconfirmed and aligned definitions that will be taken into a reviewed 'local aerodrome works regulation'. The next steps are to have the reviewed document integrated in a joint change case. When the new version of the document is published in the Aerodrome Manual, collaborative training is planned to be organised by means of a customised e-learning and on-the-job training. Do you think that misunderstanding 'PPR' (prior permission required) is not possible? Yes, it is: six different interpretations came up during the sessions.

Let's continue to work together and learn to understand each other's goals, working methods and concerns. Local Runway Safety Team Members are key for success and have, by means of an implemented SMS, the right tools to support collaboration. 

