



Top 5 ATM Operational Safety Priorities for 2013

Our Mission

Contributing to safety management and operational safety across the Network, the Network Manager identifies Network safety issues to enable aviation stakeholders to mitigate existing hazards and anticipate new operational risks. Our ultimate goal is to keep the Network safe and able to increase its capacity and efficiency.

The EUROCONTROL Safety Improvement Sub-Group (SISG), reporting to the EUROCONTROL Safety Team, was tasked to identify the Top 5 ATM Operational Safety Priorities. In 2012, the SISG followed a structured process of operational safety prioritisation. After further analysis, the Safety Team agreed the following Top 5 ATM Operational Safety Priorities for 2013.

TOP 5 ATM OPERATIONAL SAFETY PRIORITIES FOR 2013:



1. RISK OF OPERATIONS WITHOUT TRANSPONDER OR WITH A DYSFUNCTIONAL ONE

Operations without transponder or with a dysfunctional one constitute a single threat with a potential of "passing" through all the existing safety barriers up to "see and avoid".



2. LANDING WITHOUT CLEARANCE

For various reasons, aircraft sometimes land without ATC clearance resulting in Runway Incursions that are often only resolved by 'providence'.



3. DETECTION OF OCCUPIED RUNWAY

Some Runway Incursion incidents could have been prevented if controllers had had better means to detect that the runway was occupied at the time of issuing clearance to the next aircraft to use the runway.



4. "BLIND SPOT" – INEFFICIENT CONFLICT DETECTION WITH THE CLOSEST AIRCRAFT

Loss of separation "Blind Spot" events are typically characterised by the controller not detecting a conflict with the closest aircraft. They usually occur after a descent clearance and in the context of a rapidly developing situation – often when the conflicting aircraft are 1000ft and 15 nm apart.



5. CONFLICT DETECTION WITH ADJACENT SECTORS

Losses of Separation in the En-Route environment sometimes involve "inadequate coordination" of clearance with an adjacent sector. These typically involve either an early (premature) transfer of control to or from the neighbouring sector.

Our Process

The "Top 5" were identified after a detailed review of two high priority risk areas "Runway Incursion" and "Loss of Separation En-Route". The review was performed during summer 2012 and involved a series of dedicated workshops with 6 ANSPs, serving a large part of European air traffic. Comprehensive barrier models – Safety Functions Maps (SAFMAPs) – were developed and populated with representative data from the participating ANSPs. The incident data was for high severity (classified as 'A' and 'B') occurrences that had been thoroughly investigated. The data is highly informative because the incident scenarios 'test' the majority of the available safety barriers. The validity of the results was ensured by a careful, joint analysis of the investigation reports with the respective ANSPs. The analysed data forms a significant overall sample of European A and B incidents i.e. 43% of all Runway Incursion and 77% of all Losses of Separation En-route reported during 2011.

→ What will the Network Manager do and deliver?

Each 'Top 5' priority will be subject of a dedicated Operational Safety Study during 2013 that will aim to:

- Provide additional insight on causal/contributory factors.
- Suggest actions to reduce or eliminate risk factors.
- Identify industry 'best' practice and lessons learned for sharing amongst affected stakeholder groups.
- Inform development of SKYbrary materials (to further all of the above).