SM ICG Industry Day 2024
Dallas, Texas, USA
Abstracts and Speaker Biographies

May 7, 2024

Group Holdings Aviation

Presentation Title: The Key to Safety

Speaker: Robert W. Agostino, President and Director of Aviation for Group Holdings Aviation

Abstract: For 30+ years, we as an industry have focused on teamwork and crew resource management. We have approached safety as a team sport and have been successful at improving the industry. However, as aircraft have become more sophisticated and more automated, the flight crews have been somewhat anesthetized based on the high level of automation. Our training models have also developed with a high level of focus on automation and less on individual skill sets. While I agree that safety requires a significant amount of focus on the team concept, I believe it's now time to focus on the individual. As in most athletics, success is driven by teamwork and **individual excellence**. Safety is not an entity unto itself. Safety is a resultant. The resultant of competencies of the individual. The best opportunity we have for a safe outcome are teams made up of highly competent individuals working toward a common goal.

Speaker Biography:

Robert Agostino has had a unique career. He's flown for 53 consecutive years of which 50 consecutive years were in jet aircraft. Accumulating over 23,000 plus flight hours, he holds 13 type writings which encompass 25 different aircraft. His license carries the ATP, CFI CF MI and helicopter ratings. In addition to Bob's type ratings, he has flown a mirage of different aircraft from the DC-9 to F5, T33, T38 and the SK35. In simulation, Bob has flown the B, A10, F18, F35, OV22, B767 and the B787.

Bob has set 9 world records for speed over a recognized course. He was selected in 2005 to receive the laureate award from Aviation Week and Space Technology. In 2017 he received the Dr. Tony Kern award for Professionalism in Aviation, and most recently in 2023 he received the Meritorious Service Award from the Flight Safety Foundation.

He's also the recipient of the very first Business and Commercial Aviation Vision Award and has received commendations from the FAA, the United States Navy, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the US Army for his work in aviation safety.

Bob is also a member of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots (SETP), AO PA, and NBAA. He is currently serving his second term on the Gulfstream Customer Advisory Board and has been a member of the Aviation Directors Roundtable. In addition, he has served as a member on the Board of Directors of the Smithsonian affiliate, The Kansas Cosmosphere.

Bob’s management experience encompasses over 40 years of corporate flight operations, 15 years of which he was the director of flight ops for worldwide operations of Learjet/ Bombardier. Here he created the widely acclaimed Safety Standdown Program where in large part Bob participated as a key proponent of the flight test team in the development of the Lear 45, Challenger 300, and post certification work on the Global Express. He was also a member of the Learjet Accident Investigation team.

Currently Bob serves as the President and Aviation Director for Group Holdings Aviation. He is responsible for the operation of a number of Gulfstream G650 aircraft which fly a worldwide mission. Additionally, he's the vice president of American Aero (FBO) in Fort Worth which is ranked in the top three FBO's worldwide for the last seven years. During the development of the Aerion Supersonic business aircraft, Bob was the vice president of Aircraft and Flight Operations and the lead pilot for supersonic business jet development.

Southwest Airlines

Presentation Title: A Practical Approach to Safety-II

Speaker: Greg Scheidel, Sr. Safety Culture Program Manager, Southwest Airlines

Abstract: The mission of the Safety & Learning Advancement Team (SLAT) is to discover "what goes well and why" to inspire positive, data-informed enhancements to system safety and foster a culture of learning within Flight Operations at Southwest Airlines. Simply put, our focus is to better understand what makes pilots successful in everyday operations and measure the variability between work-as-imagined and work-as-done. We do this by unlocking the knowledge and experience of our pilot group through various data collection methods. Our goal is to learn about what works and what doesn't, and equally important, understand the skills and techniques our pilots use to keep our employees and passengers safe. By peering through this vastly different lens of safety, we can enhance resilient performance and strengthen system safety by sharing insights across the organization on positive outcomes and how they are produced.

Speaker Biography:

Greg Scheidel graduated from the Florida Institute of Technology with a Bachelor of Science degree in Aviation Management while earning his Commercial Single and Multi-Engine Land Rating and Instrument Rating. Greg got his start in 121 operations at PSA Airlines, working closely with FOQA, LOSA, and SMS. Greg later joined American Airlines to lead the continuous LOSA program and advance the Learning and Improvement Team (LIT). As a skilled, proven leader and recognized industry expert, Greg was brought to Southwest Airlines in 2022 to establish a Safety-II program for Flight Operations. Greg currently leads a team of 10 line pilots who have been specially trained to observe and record resilient behavior in the flight deck.

Boeing

Presentation Title: Boeing and BowTie in Safety Risk Management

Speaker: Janeece Escobar, Systems Safety Engineer, Boeing

Abstract: This presentation will discuss how Boeing is using the bowtie methodology to perform the Safety Risk Management process of hazard identification, risk analysis, and risk assessment.

Speaker Biography:

Janeece Escobar has a masters degree in Information Management Systems from Harvard Extension School. She has worked for Boeing for 14 years. She has been involved with the implementation of SMS since 2017. She is currently part of the Boeing Global Services (BGS) SMS Integration Team. Part of her responsibilities are to create training for Boeing users of the BowTieXP software and facilitate groups through the Safety Risk Management process when risks are identified.

Air Line Pilots Association

Presentation Title: Importance of Front-Line Worker in SMS

Speaker: Captain Helena Cunningham, Chair – Central Air Safety Committee Delta MEC, Air Line Pilots Association, International

Abstract: Some of our most successful safety programs have labor collaboration and it's essential for SMS processes to broadly develop those relationships to ensure operationally appropriate and improved risk assessments. Enhancing the quality of risk assessments with direct and current operational experience participants/stakeholders can yield improved results and employee acceptance of changes.

Speaker Biography:

Captain Helena (Reidemar) Cunningham is currently the Central Air Safety Chair for Delta ALPA. She recently left the position of Director of SMS after five years, prior to that she held the position of Director of Human Factors for six years in the ALPA Air Safety Organization. She was appointed as IFALPA Safety Management Working Group Chair in 2021 and in that capacity her group serves as an advisor to the ICAO SMP Annex 19. She is currently a Captain of the Boeing 767-400 at Delta Air Lines. Before that, she was a 717 Captain and previously a DC-9 First Officer instructor for 10 years. She has participated in human factors specific industry and academic research and has been published in numerous journals and books over the past 20+ years. She served as a CIRP coordinator for 5 years and Human Factors Subcommittee chair for nearly 20 years at Northwest Airlines and Delta Air Lines ALPA.

Captain Cunningham earned a BS in aviation management from Southern Illinois University; dual specialization (safety & operations) MAS in aeronautical science from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University–Daytona Beach; and a PhD ABD in safety engineering. Currently, she is an adjunct professor at the University of Memphis graduate human factors certificate program and has been teaching for over eight years at three universities. She is co-chair of A Practical Guide for Effective Pilot Monitoring working group with deliverable document published by the Flight Safety Foundation in 2014. She was elected Fellow at the Royal Aeronautical Society in London in 2014. She received the 2014 Air Safety Award from the Air Line Pilots Association, International. She served six years in the Illinois Army National Guard.

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

Presentation Title: Safety Management Systems in Pipeline Operations

Speaker: Bryan Lethcoe, Director, Southwest Region, Office of Pipeline Safety, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)

Abstract: The American Petroleum Institute (API) has developed a Recommended Practice (API RP 1173) to provide guidance to pipeline operators seeking to develop and maintain a Pipeline Safety Management System (PSMS), intended to help operators understand, manage, and continually monitor the effectiveness of risk management and enable continuous improvement of pipeline safety performance. The Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) has been a stakeholder in this effort, encouraging voluntary adherence to the Recommended Practice, to supplement operators' existing operating management systems. This presentation will give a brief overview of OPS' efforts with PSMS before focusing in on our regulatory effort for risk-based safety, Pipeline Integrity Management. Pipeline Integrity Management is a longer standing program that has proven to be a very effective example of the use of data analysis to positively impact overall pipeline safety that OPS hopes to replicate with the voluntary implementation of PSMS.

Speaker Biography:

Bryan Lethcoe is the Director for the Southwest Region of the Office of Pipeline Safety for PHMSA, working out of the Houston, Texas office. Bryan has safety and regulatory oversight of over 25% (by mileage) of the federally inspected pipeline systems and facilities, as well as all DOT jurisdictional offshore pipelines in the Gulf of Mexico and all LNG facilities nationwide. Bryan served in the U.S. Navy for 20 years, both as an active-duty submarine officer and in various leadership and staff roles in the Navy Reserve, retiring with the rank of Commander. Since leaving active duty, Bryan has over 20 years of experience working in a variety of segments in the Oil and Gas industry in Houston, including onshore and offshore pipeline integrity technology development, pipeline integrity consulting, offshore drilling technical audit and field support, LNG technical audit and operational excellence, and High Reliability Organization consulting. Prior to joining PHMSA, Bryan was the Director, Office of Program Management Support, Office of Defense Programs for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) in Albuquerque, NM.

American Airlines

Presentation Title: Applying Systems Thinking to Safety

Speaker: Stephen Palyok, Manager of Systems Engineering & Design, American Airlines

Abstract: Is your next accident/incident in today's data? Are your systems working as designed but still have adverse events? American Airlines utilizes System-Theoretical Accident Model & Process (STAMP) to proactively and reactively identify weaknesses and vulnerabilities in their systems. Using a systems-approach to learning from accidents/incidents will provide deeper insights that may not be obvious through traditional risk management.

Speaker Biography:

Stephen Palyok is a safety professional with 16 years of experience within American Airlines. Over the past decade, he has held diverse leadership positions in airport operations, training, compliance, and Safety. Since joining the American Airlines safety department in 2019, Stephen led the team responsible for their Airport Operations SMS program. Transitioning to his current position in 2022, he now leads the Safety Systems Engineering team. In this capacity, Stephen and his team facilitate comprehensive system safety analyses across the organization, ensuring that our systems and processes are designed to safeguard the well-being of all team members involved.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Air Traffic Organization

Presentation Title: Assessing Risk for Emerging Entrants - UTM

Speaker: Michael Beckles, Director, Policy, FAA Air Traffic Organization

Abstract: The rapid expansion of uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) into public, commercial, and civil applications has opened new opportunities, including infrastructure inspection and monitoring, precision agriculture, delivery services, public safety, search and rescue, and more. However, the implementation of these expanded operations presents challenges. These challenges are largely due to regulatory constraints, privacy concerns, public acceptance, and environmental impacts, but most of all the integration with current users of the National Airspace System.

The FAA and more specifically the Air Traffic Organization (ATO) will address these challenges through all activities used to Normalize UAS Beyond Visual Line of Sight Operations (NUBO). This effort starts with Small Unmanned Aircraft (sUAS) Regulations (Part 107), which initially set operational limits for sUAS. To truly realize the societal benefits, we must join with stakeholders to develop high-value use cases that require beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations and flights over populated areas, pushing the boundaries of existing rules. Thus, a new rulemaking effort under Part 108, Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operations using Special Airworthiness.

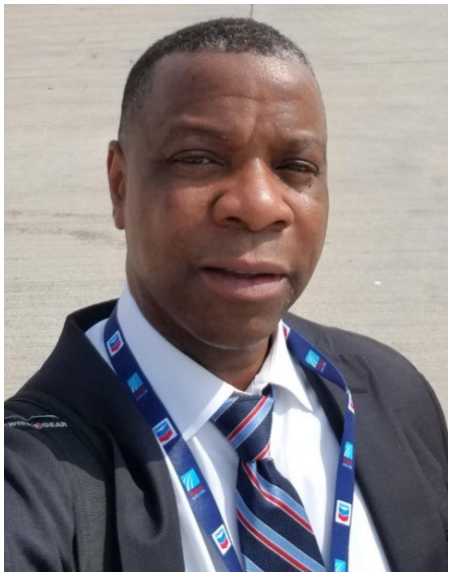
Part 108 will safely integrate UAS into low-altitude airspace by:

- Changing Right-of-Way (ROW) as proposed in the BVLOS Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC).
- Initiating a new BVLOS rating for Remote Pilot Certificate.
- Creating a new operating certificate for compensation/hire with economic authority (part 135).
- Updating operational parameters enabling operations without a SAC (current exemptions).
- Allowing for preflight activities and operations to be performed by remotely located pilots.
- Developing requirements for unmanned aircraft issued a SAC weighing up to 1320 lbs.

To safely integrate UAS into low-altitude airspace, the FAA's approach is to engage in a collaborative risk management effort with other industry partners. Our UTM concept aims to facilitate safe airspace operations by providing services such as airspace design, data services, strategic deconfliction, congestion management, route planning, and more. A critical component of our UTM success is our approach to safety and risk assessment, which has been built in throughout the process, by using a crawl, walk, run approach.

This briefing touches on current FAA efforts for UTM and NUBO supporting regulatory advancements and contributing to public safety in the evolving landscape of NAS operations.

Speaker Biography:



Michael Beckles is the Director of Policy for Mission Support Services (AJV). He oversees the development, evaluation, and maintenance of regulations, policies, and procedures. Mike provides executive leadership supporting aviation stakeholders both domestically and globally. On behalf of the ATO, Mike oversees the processing of FAA agency rulemaking activities, air traffic procedural development, air traffic environmental policy, UAS policy and integration, and standards for airspace structure, design, and allocation.

Mike brings over 39 years of federal government experience between DOD and the FAA in air traffic management, quality assurance, unmanned aircraft systems, safety management systems, international collaboration, and regulatory and policy oversight.

Mike began his FAA career in 2007 as an Air Traffic Safety Inspector within Aviation Safety. Later in 2009, Mike joined ATO Safety and Technical Training where he worked within Operational Services, Quality Assurance, and Event Investigations. He later served as Manager, ATC Audits and Assessments.

In 2013, Mike returned to Aviation Safety as Manager, Safety Management and Future Systems Branch. He was responsible for the oversight of policy, standards, and requirements relating to the ATO's operations and safety management system. Mike also participated on the AVS SMS Coordination Group, FAA SMS Committee, and FAA Space Leadership Team. In addition, Mike worked with our international partners on the Safety Management International Collaboration Group.

In 2020, Mike joined ATO Mission Support Services as the manager of the UAS Policy Team responsible for policy covering the processing of UAS waivers and authorizations. In 2021, Mike became the manager of the Airspace and Regulations Group where he oversaw ATO airspace and procedural interests in rulemaking, environmental, and ATO emerging entrant initiatives and programs. Mike also served as the U.S. member to the ICAO Air Traffic Management Operations Panel at ICAO, Montreal.

Mike is a native of Brooklyn, N.Y., and a 23-year veteran of the United States Air Force. There, Mike held several operational, senior staff, and managerial leadership positions. His assignments included numerous stateside and overseas locations including contingency deployments finally culminating with an assignment to the Pentagon, Headquarters USAF as Chief, Air Traffic System Evaluations Program.

WYVERN

Presentation Title: Insights After Hundreds of Audits Using the SM ICG SMS Evaluation Tool

Speaker: Kris Stewart, Senior Manager, Safety Support, WYVERN

Abstract: After more than six years and hundreds of SMS audits using the SM ICG SMS Evaluation Tool (SSET), WYVERN has gained unique experience to provide the SM ICG feedback on the quality of this instrument. There are many noteworthy aspects of the evaluation tool. First, the design, based on ICAO standards, recommended practices, and guidance material, makes the SSET a logical choice for global SMS audit operations. Second, because guidance information is integrated into the protocols, standardization is improved for the audit teams, while it also provides an educational value for the auditee. Third, the evaluation design criteria provide for four levels of performance per element (present, suitable, operating, and effective), which is an efficient way to visualize and indicate safety performance. Although WYVERN plans to use the SSET well into the future, there are opportunities for improvement. First, evaluating effectiveness for each element item seems to be a bit burdensome with little value added. Therefore, WYVERN suggests evaluating effectiveness for each sub-component (i.e., 1.1. 1.2, etc.) versus the element level (i.e., 1.1.1, 1.1.2, etc.). WYVERN also suggests moving the "What to look for" aligned with each applicable element item to make the use of this information more efficient. Finally, WYVERN suggests that the SM ICG provide an annex for cross-references to NAA regulations, such as FAR Part 5.

Speaker Biography:

During my two decades with Southwest Airlines, I gained experience in how to build a world-class culture. Through my years in employment and recruiting, leadership development, training, and career development coaching, I saw firsthand how valuing people creates loyal employees and ultimately, affects the bottom line in a positive way.

After leaving Southwest Airlines, I served as the Safety Director for 10 years at a general aviation charter company in Houston, Texas. During my tenure, I demonstrated strong leadership in promoting aviation safety and fostering a culture of safety within the organization. I implemented progressive safety management techniques aligned with ICAO guidance, ensuring compliance and proactive risk mitigation.

Currently, I hold the position of Senior Manager, Safety Support at WYVERN. In this role, I leverage my extensive experience in Safety Management Systems (SMS) and Emergency Response to assist aviation operators in maximizing safety practices.
My expertise lies in recruiting support from coworkers, identifying ways of preventing accidents and injuries, and promoting industry best practices.