

## SMS Best Practice/Good Practice Submission

State whether this is a Best or Good Practice:

ANSP HungaroControl

Date of submission

30<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Contact Details

SoE Study Area

SA 13.1 Safety Communication

BP/GP title

Safety Holmes - a dramatised investigation to bring safety to life

In use since

2012 at HungaroControl

ANSPs using this practice  
(for BP specifically)

no information

Key Words

mock investigation, safety awareness, lessons learnt, safety recommendations, fun

Details:

'SAFETY HOLMES' is a dramatised investigation to bring safety to life in an organisation through interaction and involvement of support staff in the event.

We think it can be a best practice because

1. The Safety Holmes dramatisation complements safety reports and safety training with participative, emotional and first-hand experience.
2. Safety Holmes can be used to help colleagues reflect on work-as done and work-as-imagined for themselves, and the influences and interactions that bring about events.
3. Dramatisation engages the imagination of all participants to help make safety learning to stick.

We have been using it since 2012 during Safety Days or Safety Weeks and for the last couple of years during our Onboarding event.

It is a mock investigation into an imaginary ATS occurrence, where the roles are played by employees. The purpose of a Safety Holmes session is to help people discover for themselves the subtle yet important safety issues and interconnections that exist in a complex organisation, and which all contribute to the safety level achieved by an ANSP. Safety Holmes takes the form of an ATS occurrence investigation where staff prepared for the roles (the 'actors') play the parts of employees involved directly or indirectly in an ATS occurrence. They present their story to other employees attending the event, who act as an investigatory body, or to several groups of 4-6 investigators. The investigators' task is to reveal the underlying factors that contributed to the occurrence and then recommend changes and improvements in the functioning of the organisation (the ANSP). In preparation for this, the 'investigators' (the audience) get a short verbal summary of the occurrence, then they listen to the story of each member of staff (the actors) involved in the case, and interview them. The actors come to the stage one-by-one, and stay on the stage when their part is over, so in the end all six or seven actors sit on the stage, and the investigators are free to ask questions to anyone of them. This interview part is followed by a 15-20-minute analysis and recommendations session, when the investigators work in their group to identify the causes and factors, and to draw up their conclusions and recommendations. Finally, they are asked to briefly present these to everybody in the room. The members of staff participating become emotionally involved in the process: the 'actors' present their stories as if it happened to them personally, and the 'investigators' have a feeling that they are interviewing people who were actually involved in an occurrence. This emotional factor is there to make the revealed issues be remembered for longer and hopefully to influence real life action at work 'when nobody is watching' more effectively than a scientific, rational presentation of the same issues. Many issues like staffing, communication, clarity of procedures, compliance, human factor issues, responsibilities etc. were highlighted so far. The event is very popular, feedback shows that participants keep talking about the safety issues long after the event. Based on feedback from HungaroControl participants, the Safety Holmes dramatisation method helps to complement safety reports and other aspects of safety training, adding an emotional, first-hand and fun dimension. It has become one of the tools to raise safety awareness for support staff throughout the organisation. The method was presented at a workshop in Malmö where SHPSG members (EUROCONTROL safety human performance subgroup) took part. Feedback was very positive.

Safety Holmes was developed to enhance safety communication and get staff involved in problem solving, detecting safety issues or concerns, following rules and procedures, recognising human behaviour, making decisions. It is always an opportunity for support staff to meet controllers, investigators and safety staff in a more informal environment.

An article about Safety Holmes was published in June 2017, HindSight 25.

**By submitting this document, your organisation is willing for the proposed Best or Good Practice to be shared with other ANSPs.**

For Best Practices, this document should be sent together with the SoE in SMS questionnaire, to: [soe\\_2025@eurocontrol.int](mailto:soe_2025@eurocontrol.int) **by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at the latest.**

Submissions for consideration as Good Practices may be sent by the above date. They may also be identified during the survey interview sessions with the assessment team, following which a Good Practice submission document will be requested.