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NATS

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CONFIDENTIAL HUMAN FACTORS INCIDENT REPORTING PROGRAMME (CHIRP)

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The United Kingdom Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme (CHIRP) exists to improve the safety of the travelling public and that of individuals employed within or associated with aviation operations. It provides an independent and confidential conduit for all who are involved in civil aviation in the UK to report air safety- and security-related concerns and experiences that can be passed on – in disidentified format – to agencies and organisations best placed to resolve them.
- 1.2 The fundamental principle underpinning CHIRP is that all reports are treated in absolute confidence in order that reporters' identities are protected. Any aviation-related safety or security issues that give rise to concern may be reported to CHIRP, however the legal responsibility to report accidents to the UK Air Accidents Investigation Branch and safety related occurrences, including accidents, to the UK Civil Aviation Authority in accordance with EU Regulations should be understood. If the reporter feels unable to report through these channels CHIRP represents an independent method for raising concerns, notably in the area of human factors including, but not confined to: the design and use of aircraft and equipment, rules and procedures, regulations, workplaces, manpower, organisation, management, communication, human skills and training.
- 1.3 The Programme does not replace employers' Safety Management Systems (SMS) reporting schemes that reporters should always consider using before reporting to CHIRP, but it offers a confidential alternative for all who wish their identities to be protected. CHIRP does not accept reports submitted anonymously as this prevents the possibility of obtaining any additional information that may be needed to help resolve the issue and it denies CHIRP from informing the reporter how the problem was addressed. Following resolution of any reported problem, all information associated with the identity of the reporter is deleted or otherwise destroyed.
- 1.4 In the main, therefore, CHIRP exists to receive what may be described as 'near miss' incident and hazard reports that have not progressed to the stage at which they become 'reportable occurrences and accidents' as described above. After reports have been disidentified, CHIRP will:
- Determine, with guidance from advisory boards that comprise practitioners experienced in the relevant disciplines, what the core issues are and who needs to be informed so that they can take corrective action;
 - Obtain reporters' agreements to use their disidentified reports to compile and publish periodical newsletters so that a wider audience may read and learn from reporters' experiences and lessons identified;
 - Analyse and compare reports to identify common factors and emerging trends for communication to those who are responsible for specifying procedures, training requirements, design requirements or exercising safety or security oversight.
- 1.5 Any person who is based in the United Kingdom or whose company/organisation is similarly based in the UK and whose aviation-related activities may be threatened by shortcomings in safety or security may submit reports to CHIRP. Crews of aircraft not registered in the UK but operating in UK airspace or through UK aerodromes, and their ground handling staff, may also submit reports to CHIRP on matters affecting safety or security within the UK.
- 1.6 Thus reporters will include: pilots (both private and professional), cabin and other crew members who perform an operational function whilst the aircraft is airborne, Air Traffic Control and Flight Information Service, aircraft maintenance engineers, design engineers and ground handling staff, airport security staff and all who are involved in the production and execution of air display flying. Reporters could also include managers and those involved in operational planning and the dispatch of aircraft, and staff employed to provide safety oversight.

2 Reporting

- 2.1 Reports should be sent to CHIRP using any of the means described on the CHIRP website www.chirp.co.uk.
- 2.2 Reports can also be submitted using the free CHIRP smartphone and tablet App that can be found in the App Store (Apple products) and from Google Play (Android devices) by searching using the words, 'CHIRP' and 'Safety'.
- 2.3 What should I report?

Safety and security-related incidents or events that involve:

- Yourself;
- Your organisation;

- Other people or organisations with whom you interact.

Incidents/events that have the potential to increase risk such as:

- Mistakes and misjudgements made by the reporter;
- Non-compliance with, or mis-application of specified procedures and regulations;
- Impractical or inadequate regulations, rules or instructions;
- Unsafe practices or design features.

2.4 What don't I report?

- Incidents or events that have no air safety or security content;
- Industrial relations and/or terms and conditions of employment;
- Incidents, occurrences and accidents for which a mandatory report must be submitted in accordance with the regulations or as specified by any organisation for which you work.

2.5 When do I report?

- When you are concerned and wish to protect your identity;
- When you wish others to benefit from a valuable 'Lesson learned';
- When other reporting procedures are not appropriate or are not available;
- When you have exhausted company or regulatory reporting procedures without the issue having been addressed.

3 Newsletters

3.1 Periodical newsletters entitled FEEDBACK are delivered by e-mail to all UK pilots, ATCOs, FISOs and licensed engineers using the CAA's database of e-mail addresses. Anyone else can ask to be added to the CHIRP database of addressees by contacting CHIRP at mail@chirp.co.uk. In addition, Cabin Crew FEEDBACK is distributed in hardcopy. FEEDBACK can also be accessed via the CHIRP website and via the CHIRP smartphone and tablet Apps that can be programmed to notify the user when a new edition has been published. All FEEDBACKs are published free of charge, and each is tailored to the relevant discipline, eg Air Transport, Cabin Crew, General Aviation, Maritime.

3.2 FEEDBACKs typically contain an introduction or editorial, followed by selected reports (disidentified) accompanied by observations or comments that reflect advice provided by the relevant advisory board.

4 Organisation and Status

4.1 CHIRP includes both Aviation and Maritime Programmes, the latter being the 'Confidential Hazardous Incident Programme', which functions in a broadly similar manner to the former yet having a global reach. Although the UK Civil Aviation Authority sponsors the Aviation Programme, its location, staff and functioning are remote from its sponsor. Separation from the Regulator is assured by CHIRP being managed as a Charitable Trust with governance provided by a Board of Trustees whose members include persons experienced in a range of activities associated with the aviation and maritime communities.

4.2 CHIRP delivers an independent, voluntary and confidential reporting system that satisfies requirements prescribed by the European Union. CHIRP is included in the UK State Safety Programme.

4.3 The continued success of CHIRP in capturing 'near miss' safety-related incidents depends upon the quality and content of the reports it receives.