

# ASAP- Aviation Safety Action Program Newsletter

Medallion Foundation  
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### ASAP Program Extended to FAA Controllers

New FAA Safety Culture Reflected In Operational Error Reporting  
Reducing Emphasis On Blame In Controller Errors

The FAA says it has taken another step toward a new safety culture by reducing the emphasis on blame in the reporting of operational errors by air traffic controllers.

"We're moving away from a culture of blame and punishment," said FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt. "It's important to note that controllers remain accountable for their actions, but we're moving toward a new era that focuses on why these events occur and what can be done to prevent them."

Effective immediately, the names of controllers will not be included in reports sent to FAA headquarters on operational errors, which occur when the proper distance between aircraft is not maintained. The controller's identity will be known at the facility where the event took place. Necessary training will be conducted and disciplinary action taken, if appropriate. Both will be recorded in the controller's record. Removing names on the official report will allow investigators to focus on what happened rather than who was at fault.

"We need quality information in order to identify problems and learn from incidents before they become accidents," Babbitt said. "The best sources of that information are our front-line employees. Our success depends on their willingness to identify safety concerns."

In order to avoid disrupting operations, controllers will not be automatically removed from their position following an operational error unless it is deemed necessary to remove them. Another change designed to avoid disruptions allows reports to be

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filed by the close of the next business day unless the operational error is significant. Reports previously had to be filed within four hours.

This action is part of the transition to the FAA's new non-punitive reporting system for controllers. The Air Traffic Safety Action Program (ATSAP), which now covers one-third of the country, allows controllers and other employees to report safety problems without fear of punishment unless the incident is deliberate or criminal in nature. Today's change in the reporting requirements for operational errors provides for a more seamless transition as ATSAP is rolled out to the entire country.

The reporting changes do not alter the investigation and analysis of operational errors. They also do not change the requirements for addressing the causal and contributing factors to those events.

## FAA Steps up Pressure on Carriers to Adopt Voluntary Safety Schemes

FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt has asked airlines to adopt voluntary safety measures, and to outline their commitment in a written response by 31 July following a Colgan Air Bombardier Q400 crash in February.

US airlines have been asked to implement a policy of asking pilot job applicants for voluntary disclosure of FAA records-such as notices of disapproval-as FAA works with the US Congress to update the Pilot Records Improvement Act of 1996 to possibly require airlines to seek such information.

Further, Babbitt is asking all airlines to participate in voluntary safety reporting schemes such as the Flight Operations Quality Assurance (FOQA) and the Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP). In addition to participating in FOQA and ASAP, Babbitt is requesting in a letter to carriers that airlines develop data analysis processes to "ensure effective use of this information".

The new administrator is also requesting that majors with regional partners seek ways to ensure that the feeder airline adopts and implements "the most effective practices for safety".

Babbitt is also asking majors to have periodic meetings with regional partners that participate in FOQA and ASAP to review program data and "to constantly emphasize their shared safety philosophy". While the FAA cannot require airlines to comply with voluntary measures, Babbitt has previously indicated, "I don't think October is too unreasonable to make public who chooses not to do those things."

Babbitt's safety efforts appear to have industry support, including that of the Regional Airline Association (RAA) and the Air Transport Association of America (ATA).

However, airlines are not the only target of Babbitt's safety initiative. He has also asked airline unions to publish a code of ethics and to establish professional standards and ethics committees to develop peer audit and review procedures.

Labor groups are also asked to support periodic safety risk management meetings between FAA and mainline and regional carriers "to promote the most effective practices, including periodic analysis of FOQA and ASAP data with an emphasis on identifying enhancements to the training program", Babbitt says in a letter to unions.

## The Stats of Growing

Our program is continuing to grow and provide valuable information to the participants. As of this writing we have received 288 reports. Of those the ERC has accepted 97%. Another important statistic is that over half (56%) have resulted in changes to company training or procedures. This clearly demonstrates the value of the program to bring about improvements. Sometimes we get multiple reports (Capt and FO, for example) for the same event that is why those numbers are different. Also note that 74 % were sole source meaning the FAA didn't know about them until reported by ASAP program.

Number of Reports: 288

Number of events: 231

Number ERC reviewed 285

Accepted Reports: 277 Percent: 97.19%

Sole Source: 212 Percent: 74.39%  
ASAP Successes: 161 56.49%

What are your questions about the program? If you would like to see an issue discussed or have a question we can cover in the newsletter for everyone's benefit, send it to [Kent@Medallionfoundation.org](mailto:Kent@Medallionfoundation.org). We would be happy to include it in an upcoming edition of our newsletter.

Sincerely,

Kent Adams  
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