

MEDIA RELEASE

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AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE COMES UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

The South African Civil Aviation Authority, (SACAA) will this week be hosting a number of workshops for organizations that perform maintenance on aircraft (Aircraft Maintenance Organizations), to engage them on how to enhance aviation safety. Proper maintenance of aircraft remains an important element of aviation safety and one which is comprehensively audited by the SACAA, because any deficiencies at this level can have disastrous consequences. These workshops will be held in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town on 1, 2 and 4 April respectively.

Aircraft Maintenance Organizations are entities that are licensed by the SACAA to perform the requisite maintenance on aircraft in accordance with the applicable civil aviation regulations and recommended standards. The continued airworthiness of an aircraft (or its fit-to-fly status) is primarily dependent on proper maintenance being performed at regular intervals, as prescribed by the aircraft manufacturers. Mr Obert Chakarisa, General Manager for Aircraft Safety at the SACAA says: “The role played by Aircraft Maintenance Organizations (AMOs) is so vital in the entire aviation chain such that any contravention of regulations or sub-standard maintenance activities could severely impact on aviation safety”.

Mr Chakarisa says although the SACAA does not have any urgent concerns regarding the AMO sector, continuous engagement with the industry was an absolute necessity to explore ways of enhancing aviation safety at maintenance levels. He said, “in terms of aircraft maintenance, we are proud that South Africa exceeds global best practices, but there is always room for improvement”.

Captain Colin Jordaan, CEO of the SACAA and Commissioner for Civil Aviation, says that because of the crucial role they play in aviation, maintenance organizations, like airlines and other aviation facilities, need to be subjected to the same comprehensive and rigorous surveillance audits by the SACAA. Captain Jordaan says that maintenance issues must never be left to fate, because any loopholes at this level can lead to major aviation disasters. He says: “Stringent measures must be applied at all times to ensure that safety is never compromised, and any deficiencies and weaknesses in the system must always be addressed immediately”.

Captain Jordaan says AMOs have a critical role to play in the prevention of aircraft accidents and serious incidents. A large percentage of aircraft accidents are often caused by technical / maintenance failures, either due to disregard for maintenance procedures and requirements, or due to cutting corners. He says, “If these can be avoided, I’m sure this will contribute to achieving higher levels of safety and reducing accidents”.

Captain Jordaan says that AMOs, like other aviation operations, are expected to constantly conform to all the applicable regulations and standards, because the SACAA does not compromise when it comes to issues of aviation safety. He says AMOs are expected to continue working with the Authority to achieve aviation safety, and the Authority will, in turn, offer its support and assistance.

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