

The South African Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)

1. Establishment

The CAA was established in October 1998 as an independent regulatory authority, charged with regulating the civil aviation industry in SA. It is now one of the independent agencies of the Department of Transport.

2. Vision

Our Vision is: Regulatory Excellence in Aviation Safety and Security

3. Legislative Mandate

The mandate of the CAA is:

- To control and regulate civil aviation in the Republic of South Africa;
- To control, regulate and promote civil aviation safety and security;
- To oversee the functioning and development of the civil aviation industry;
- To investigate civil aviation accidents and serious incidents.

4. How does the CAA ensure aviation safety and security in SA?

In order to ensure aviation safety and security in the country, the CAA conducts regular inspections and audits on all our stakeholders, including licensing of aviation personnel to ensure that they comply with all the standards and requirements as laid down in the Civil Aviation Regulations (CARs).

Our stakeholders are:

- Aircraft Owners and Operators.
- Aircraft Designers and Manufacturers.
- Aircraft Maintenance Organisations.
- Airline Operators.
- Airports.
- Licensed Aviation Personnel.
- Aviation Training Organisations.
- Air Traffic Services Units.

5. Our roles, in brief, entail the following:

- To ensure that aircraft that fly in our airspace are airworthy and “fit to fly.”
- To oversee the examination, licensing and training of aviation personnel.
- To oversee aerodromes (airports, airstrips and helistops) to ensure that they comply with regulations.
- To ensure the effective management and provision of air traffic services through the allocation of airspace by the statutory consultative body, the National Airspace Committee (NASCOM)

- To provide timely and accurate aeronautical information to the aviation community.
- To provide calibration services for radio navigation aids in South Africa and in the SADC region on request.
- To oversee aviation security issues in the country.
- To investigate aircraft accidents and serious incidents with a view to preventing their recurrence.
- To regulate and oversee the safety of flight operations in South Africa.
- To ensure that aircraft and aircraft products meet their type design standards.
- To oversee aviation medicine in South Africa.

6. Special Projects to enhance aviation safety and security in SA

The CAA is currently running a number of initiatives to improve aviation safety and security in SA. The following is but a few example of them.

6.1. Safety Seminars

6.1.1. Accidents reduction target

In February 2006, the CAA convened a National Aviation Safety Seminar with all the relevant stakeholders in the industry to discuss ways of improving safety in the country that would ultimately lead to the reduction of aircraft accidents and serious incidents.

During that Seminar, the CAA, together with the industry, agreed to a target of 25% accidents reduction rate in the country.

6.1.2. Implementation of recommendations

During that Seminar, a number of recommendations on how to enhance safety in SA were also put forward by the industry. The CAA is ultimately responsible for ensuring and overseeing the implementation of those recommendations. Some of those recommendations were:

- The CAA should improve the quality and quantity of its oversight activities, i.e. conduct more inspections and audits on the industry to ensure absolute compliance with regulations.
- Stringent measures should be taken against those who break aviation laws, and an aviation court or tribunal should be established for this purpose.
- Skills shortage in the industry needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency;
- The CAA and industry need to work in partnership to improve the levels of safety in SA;
- The CAA should consider utilizing industry experts to assist in conducting audits and inspections.

6.1.3. Aviation Safety Awards

One of the recommendations emanating from the Seminar was that annual industry safety awards should be introduced to recognise those who walk the extra mile to enhance safety in the country.

It is believed that these awards will encourage individuals and organizations to put safety on top of their agenda and make it an integral part of their working culture, while also encouraging a culture of voluntary compliance by operators.

The first of these awards will take place in 2007.

6.1.4. Regional Safety Seminars

Regional safety seminars are also being conducted with all role players to ensure that the message reaches everyone in the industry – from the biggest airline operator in Johannesburg to a small flying school in the Free State. Regional seminars will also ensure that all sectors of the industry are covered.

6.2. CAA Renewal Project – “Towards an A1 CAA”

The CAA launched a renewal project in June this year to transform the organization into a world-class regulatory organization. One of the key objectives of this project is to raise the bar on aviation safety and security. The CAA hopes to achieve this by:

- Overhauling and improving our systems and processes of overseeing the industry;
- Increasing the quality and quantity of our oversight activities, in line with the recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO);
- Improving our pool of technical expertise to ensure effective delivery on our core mandate;
- Finalizing the development and promulgation of outstanding civil aviation regulations to ensure that we have all the necessary legal instruments to oversee and enforce compliance by the industry;
- Working in partnership with the industry to encourage voluntary compliance.

South Africa is also going to be subjected to an ICAO audit in July 2007, and it is crucial that we pass that audit. The other purpose of “A1” project, therefore, is to prepare the CAA for that important audit. Also, with 2010 also approaching very fast, we need to assure South Africans, and the rest of the world, that South Africa will be able to deliver a safe aviation environment during that crucial FIFA Soccer World Cup event. We have to assure the world that we are ready to handle the anticipated increase in aviation activity effectively and efficiently, without compromising safety and security.

6.3. Technical Assistance Agreement with the FAA

The CAA has a Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) with our counterpart in the USA, the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA), in which the two parties agreed to work together and assist each other on technical issues.

As part of that MOU, the CAA is currently working with the FAA as our benchmarking partner to compare our oversight systems with theirs, to ensure that our systems are on par with international standards.

6.4. Implementation of recommendations that emanated from the ICAO Security Audit of August 2006

From 14 to 23 August 2006, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) conducted a state audit on aviation security in South Africa. The audit was conducted specifically on the CAA, ACSA, South African Airways and Interlink Airlines.

The feedback we received from the ICAO team about the state of aviation security in South Africa was overwhelmingly positive and encouraging, which effectively means South Africa is among the best in the world on issues of aviation security.

The ICAO team was extremely impressed with the amount of work that has already been done in this area, as well as the level of sophistication of South Africa's aviation security systems and measures. The report we received from the ICAO team was that the state (South Africa) has far exceeded the (ICAO) standards.

There were however, a few recommendations that the State, through the CAA as the regulator, needed to implement. Although the feedback we received was positive, we will not remain complacent. The CAA is therefore overseeing and ensuring that those recommendations are being implemented by the relevant stakeholders.

6.5. Involvement in SADC

As a leading economy in SADC, South Africa has been requested by ICAO to take the lead in on key aviation matters in this region. Against this background, therefore, the CAA is spearheading a number of safety enhancement initiatives in this region.

Our involvement in other parts of the continent other than South Africa will go a long way in assisting to achieve the universal goal of "Safer Skies for Africa", and ultimately, the orderly and progressive development of aviation on the continent.