IATA AIRLINES AND IOSA REGISTRATION
An Important Mark of Quality

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced on 1st April that all 224 of its member airlines, comprising 93% of all scheduled international air traffic, are listed on the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) registry.

“Today is a momentous day for aviation safety, our number one priority. IATA membership is now synonymous with best practice in airline safety. This is a great achievement and an important mark of quality for all IATA airlines. This in turn is a reassurance for travellers everywhere of aviation’s serious commitment to safety,” said Giovanni Bisignani, IATA’s Director General and CEO.

IOSA is the global industry standard for airline operational safety management. The IOSA registry (www.iata.org/registry) now consists of 308 airlines, 224 of which are IATA members. IOSA’s 900+ standards, developed in cooperation with the world’s leading airlines and regulators (including FAA, CASA, JAA, Transport Canada) represent industry best practice in all aspects of operational safety. Registration is valid for two years from the date at which the audit was commenced.

At the 2006 Annual General Meeting IOSA was made a condition of IATA membership with three milestones. By 31st December 2006, member airlines had to complete contractual arrangements for an IOSA audit. By 31st December 2007, all audits needed to be completed. And by 31st December 2008, all audit findings had to be closed and the carrier noted on the IOSA registry. Failure to meet any of the deadlines resulted in termination of IATA membership, with effect 90 days after the milestone.

Qatar Airways was the first airline to have its IOSA audit in September 2003. A total of nine carriers had their memberships terminated as a result of not meeting the 2006 or 2007 milestone deadlines. A further eight resigned their memberships at the end of 2008 as they needed more time to complete preparations for a successful audit. One airline lost its IATA membership on 31st March 2009 as a result of being unable to complete the registration process. “The vast majority of IATA member airlines completed the IOSA process. We are now working with those airlines not able to make the deadline to bring them up to the high IOSA standard as soon as possible,” said Bisignani.

IOSA standards are available free-of-charge to any commercial airline. In 2009 IATA will invest US$ 8 million to fund IOSA audits for its member airlines. Non-IATA members can undergo an IOSA audit by contracting with one of the 8 accredited audit organisations.
Improving Safety

“Meeting the high standards of IOSA was a challenge for all airlines. Today, air travel is safer as a result of these efforts,” said Bisignani.

The global hull loss rate in 2008 was 0.81 accidents per million flights (one accident for every 1.2 million flights). For IATA members the accident rate was 0.52 per million departures (one accident for every 1.9 million flights). IOSA is one of the elements driving the significantly better safety record of IATA member airlines.

“The goal of IOSA is to improve safety - not reduce our membership numbers,” said Bisignani. IATA invested US$3 million in its Partnership for Safety programme which helped 180 airlines worldwide to prepare for IOSA with gap analysis audits, and specific training courses.

IOSA and Governments

IOSA has won recognition by governments around the world. “Safety oversight is a government responsibility. Aviation is the safest way to travel because of industry-government cooperation and global standards. IOSA is a great tool for governments to enhance their oversight programmes. Many are using it successfully already. And I urge all others to follow their great example,” said Bisignani.

The FAA accepts the use of IOSA by American carriers for their code-share arrangements with foreign airlines. Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Egypt, Madagascar, Mexico, Panama, Syria and Turkey are among the countries that have mandated IOSA in national legislation.

Improving Efficiency

IOSA is also helping the airlines to focus their safety efforts by reducing redundant and repetitive auditing. Audit results, stored in a central database, can be shared, with the audited airline’s approval, with partner airlines and governments. Since its inception, IOSA has helped to avoid almost 1200 redundant audits, saving US$71 million.

Next Steps

IATA is building on the success of the IOSA programme to improve safety on the ground. Ground accidents cost the industry US$4 billion annually. The IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO) was launched in 2008 for ground handlers to improve safety and reduce this cost. ISAGO uses industry best practice standards with a similar central registry. Since launching, a total 45 audits have been conducted. Both IOSA and ISAGO are part of the IATA Six point safety strategy. Along with auditing, the strategy includes specific programmes for infrastructure safety, safety data management and analysis, operational safety, safety management systems and maintenance. IATA (International Air Transport Association) represents some 230 airlines comprising 93% of scheduled international air traffic.