It was announced from Washington on 25 June that the US Department of Transportation’s Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in partnership with the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), has begun a safety reporting programme called the Safety Review Process (SRP). This 18-month pilot programme, open to all bargaining-unit employees, allows FAA employees who work in the Aircraft Certification Service (AIR) to elevate safety concerns without fear of retaliation.

US Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx commented: ‘It is critical that our DOT employees have the opportunity to work in an environment where they are comfortable coming forward with safety concerns. This new safety review process will further advance our culture of safety and help ensure that the flying public has the best, safest experience possible.’

Modelled after a similar process implemented by the FAA’s Office of Airports last year, the SRP fosters a voluntary, cooperative, non-punitive environment for open reporting by the more than 700 AIR employees represented by NATCA, and provides a tool to quickly elevate safety-related concerns. The FAA expects that most safety concerns will continue to be resolved at the local level. However, the SRP will provide another way for employees to identify potential safety issues. An evaluation of the SRP will occur after the 18-month pilot programme concludes, to determine if it will become permanent.

Added FAA Administrator Michael P Huerta: ‘The FAA has a highly motivated workforce dedicated to our safety mission. This programme extends voluntary reporting opportunities to even more of our employees.’

NATCA Regional Vice president Mike MacDonald commented: ‘We are pleased to have this additional voluntary safety reporting system in place for the Aircraft Certification Service. Voluntary reporting systems are a proven vehicle to improve the safety culture, and the AIR Safety Reporting Programme will further reduce the safety concerns of both the FAA and NATCA.’

About the SRP
The SRP process begins when an employee files a confidential report to raise a safety issue or event through an online reporting system. An SRP Safety Oversight Board composed of two FAA managers and two NATCA representatives will then review and analyze the report. If the issue satisfies the safety criteria identified in the Memorandum of Understanding, the Board will identify and assign a Subject Matter Expert (SME) Panel to investigate and
respond to the request with its recommendations. Once accepted, the Board will send recommendations to the appropriate manager and monitor the agreed-upon solution. The Board will also send a final report to the employee who raised the safety concern. After removing identifying information, a resolution report will be posted for all AIR employees to view.