# SAFETY
## Alaska Accidents

Federal Aviation Administration

### FY 2009 Performance Target

*"Reduce accidents in Alaska for general aviation and all part 135 operations to no more than 99 in FY 2009."*

### Flight Plan Objective and Performance Target

Objective 2: Reduce general aviation fatalities.

Performance Target: By the end of FY 2009, reduce accidents in Alaska for general aviation and all Part 135 operations from the 2000-2002 average of 130 accidents per year to no more than 99 accidents per year. This measure will be converted from a number to a rate at the beginning of FY 2010.

| | FY 2005 | FY 2006 | FY 2007 | FY 2008 | FY 2009 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 120 | 115 | 110 | 104 | 99 |
| **Actual** | 128 | 101[1] | 92[2] | 108[3] | |

[1] Final result revised from preliminary estimate of 102 in FY 2008.

[2] Preliminary estimate until March 2009.

[3] Preliminary estimate until March 2010.

### Definition of Measure

Unit of Measure: The total number of all Part 135 and general aviation accidents in Alaska.

Computation: The number of general aviation and all Part 135 accidents in Alaska during the fiscal year is calculated.

Formula: Count of the number of accidents.

Scope of Measure: This measure includes scheduled and non-scheduled FAR Part 135 accidents, as well as general aviation accidents, including both fatal and non-fatal accidents. This measure is not a sub-measure of the General Aviation Fatal Accidents performance target. Flight operations in Alaska are diverse and they are responsive to the state's challenging aviation environment and unique air transportation requirements.

Part 135 operations in Alaska are dominated by single-engine airplanes powered by a reciprocating engine, operated under visual flight rules (VFR), and crewed by a single pilot. Operating in rough terrain, adverse weather, and in areas of extreme isolation increases the difficulties in conducting safe flight operations. General aviation pilots often use the same types of single-engine airplanes and cope with the same environmental challenges as Part 135 operators.

### Why the FAA Chooses this Measure

This measure was adopted by the FAA in 2004. Although Alaska has a relatively high number of accidents, it also has a low number of fatal accidents. The overwhelming majority of accidents in Alaska results in little or no injuries. Using the same measure as general aviation throughout the NAS (fatal accidents) would result in a random distribution of fatal accidents that would be difficult to base a safety goal on. Expanding the numerator in the Alaska safety metric to include accidents, whether fatal or not, allowed for a large enough data pool to conduct trend analysis, study accident seasonal distribution, and form the basis for a valid safety goal.

### Source of the Data

The data on Part 135 and general aviation accidents come from the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB's) Aviation Accident Database. Aviation accident investigators under the auspices of the NTSB develop the data.

### Statistical Issues

There is no major error in the accident counts. Random variation in air crashes results in a significant variation in the number of fatal accidents over time. The FAA plans to convert the current measure to a true rate-based measure in FY 2010. Starting in FY 2010, the FAA will use a rate based on accidents involving fatalities and serious injuries. This will shift the focus away from the number of accident and allow us to target our safety initiatives on accidents that pose the greatest risk to the flying public. A rate-based metric will also allow the FAA to trend safety performance over time regardless of fluctuations in flying activity caused by economic conditions, price of fuel, weather conditions, and other variables.

Unlike commercial aviation activity that is reported regularly to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics by the carriers, general aviation flight hours are based on an annual survey conducted by the FAA and response to the survey is voluntary. The general aviation community and the General Aviation Joint Steering Committee of the Safer Skies initiative recommended development of a data collection program that will yield more accurate and relevant data on general aviation demographics and utilization. Improved survey and data collection methodologies have been developed.

As a result of these efforts, the FAA, working with the General Aviation Manufacturers Association, has made continual improvements to the general aviation survey. First, the sample size has been significantly increased. Second, a reporting sheet has been created to make it much easier for organizations with large fleets to report. Third, the agency worked with the Aircraft Registry to improve the accuracy of contact information. As a result, a survey was completed in FY 2004 that, for the first time, creates a statistically valid report of general aviation activity that the general aviation community agrees on. Each year since 2004, significant improvements have been made which in turn substantially improved the accuracy of the data. Today the data is considered to be highly accurate by both the FAA and a broad range of industry stakeholders.

### Completeness

NTSB and FAA's Office of Accident Investigation meet regularly to validate information on the number of accidents. Accident data is initially considered preliminary. The NTSB usually completes investigations and issues reports on accidents that occur during any fiscal year by the end of the next fiscal year. Results are considered final when all those accidents have been reported in the NTSB press release published by March. FY 2008 results will therefore be final after the 2010 press release. In general, however, accident numbers are not likely to change significantly between the end of the fiscal year and the date they are finalized. The FAA considers the numbers stable within 60 days after the end of a fiscal year.

### Reliability

FAA uses performance data extensively for program management and personnel evaluation and accountability. Most accident investigations are a joint undertaking between FAA and NTSB. NTSB has the statutory responsibility, but, in fact, most of the accident investigations related to general aviation are delegated by the NTSB to FAA Aviation Safety Inspectors without NTSB direct involvement. The FAA's own accident investigators participate in all accident investigations led by NTSB investigators.