



SASO – System Approach for Safety Oversight

SASO Program Draws on 145 Inspector Knowledge to Promote Aviation Safety

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From June to December 2006, the SASO Program, led by AFS-30, drew upon the expertise of close to 100 Aviation Safety Inspectors (ASIs), Supervisors, Office Managers, and other aviation experts to learn about the current part 145 environment and to identify opportunities to incorporate system safety into future oversight processes.

The SASO Program is looking at part 145 certification and surveillance activities as part of its comprehensive effort to systematically apply risk management and safety principles to aviation oversight. The goal of the Part 145 Pilot Project is to design, develop and demonstrate a standard, system safety based approach for the oversight of part 145 repair stations in the U.S. and abroad. The SASO Program is pursuing similar activities for part 121 and 135 oversight. Eventually, the SASO Program Office will apply this system approach to safety oversight to all aviation regulatory parts.

The SASO Program's approach to the Part 145 Pilot Project is based on the understanding that people drive process and technological change, and that people are directly affected by organizational policies and procedures. Therefore, the SASO Program Office is taking an integrated approach – in addition to observing oversight processes in the field, there is a strong focus on understanding the potential barriers to change in the part 145 environment.

"This approach distinguishes our work from many AFS/AVS systems development efforts," said Rich Abbott, AFS-30 Business Process Reengineering Lead. Abbott further emphasized that "we want a complete

knowledge of how work in the field is carried out before thinking through any changes."

To draw on inspector and industry knowledge, the SASO Program Office collaborated with FAA and industry experts by conducting a series of interviews and "on-the-job" shadowing activities. This allowed the SASO Program Office to gain a first-hand perspective on how ASIs perform their daily activities in the field, and the challenges they face. Four FSDOs – including Windsor Locks, Miami, Van Nuys, and Lincoln, and the South Florida IFO – were visited by AFS-30 to ensure a representation of diversity in office sizes, geography and culture. During the course of this work, over 20 diverse repair stations were also visited.

Through this work, the SASO Program Office was able to collect detailed information on part 145 certification and surveillance activities and systems. Key barriers to change, such as those around communication and training, were also identified. The SASO Program Office plans to validate the information it has collected, and in Spring 2007, will begin to develop improved processes, training and communications based on information gathered from the field.

"The offices we visited really appreciate the approach of involving them in the process at this early stage," said Estrella Gonzales, AFS-30 Assistant Program Manager and Change Management Lead. "This is especially important because of the agency's record of program execution and listening to the field. If we do it right, the field is willing to accept change."