

B. JOINT SESSION

***TOP-DOWN SAFETY FOCUS: FATIGUE RISK
MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (FRMS)***



*June 17, 2008
12:45 – 14:00*

Panel Overview

The “*Top-Down Safety Focus: Fatigue Risk Management Systems (FRMS)*” session was chaired by Captain Paul McCarthy, an IFALPA representative to ICAO. The panel included presentations by aviation experts, two from US-based carriers and one from the aircraft manufacturing industry. Dr. New, of Delta Air Lines, reviewed the role of Safety Management Systems (SMS) in aviation environments and set the stage for the other two panel presentations that focused on Fatigue Risk Management Systems (FRMS). Dr. Graeber, Boeing Commercial Airplanes reviewed the current state of FRMS and also discussed suggestions for implementing FRMS within SMS for future alertness management initiatives. Captain Gunther provided an operational example of a FRMS by reviewing some components of Continental Airlines’ approach to fatigue and alertness management. The panel was intended to provide the audience with an understanding of the components of a successful SMS, explain the role of a FRMS within a SMS and provide an example demonstrating potential operational benefits. Specific recommendations of how a FRMS could be implemented in a SMS were also addressed during the panel presentations.

Over the past few years, Safety Management Systems have become an accepted safety initiative in aviation

environments throughout the world. One commonly accepted definition of a ‘Safety Management System’ is that provided in the ICAO Safety Management Manual (2006). Given the diversity of aviation operations, the specific processes to identify acceptable and unacceptable fatigue-related risks can be organizations specific. Independent of the uniqueness of operational needs, it is important that the specific processes be operationally relevant, standardized and applicable to the corporation as a whole.

Clear documentation of the components of the SMS is important to allow for successful implementation within an organization. As reviewed during the panel, some other important components include a safety policy that demonstrates a firm commitment to implement a safety management system, a non-punitive hazard reporting system for flight crew, safety assurance, and quality management techniques to identify hazards, analyze risk, and put appropriate actions into play.

A Safety Management System provides a valid context for implementing a Fatigue Risk Management System. A FRMS could be one of the important tools in the SMS “toolbox.” However, as discussed during the panel, the challenge remains that FRMS approaches tend to have a foundation in science yet current flight time limitations have remained without update and do not assess fatigue-related safety risks. Despite these challenges, organizations can begin the development and implementation of a

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FRMS as part of an overall Safety Management System or as a stand-alone approach for the mitigation of fatigue.

Airline carriers are currently taking some of the first steps of incorporating a FRMS into their overall SMS approach. Continental Airlines' approach for overseeing operational safety and ensuring mitigation initiatives are taken in a

timely manner was presented as part of the panel to demonstrate the importance of a multi-level, broad organization approach. This helped to emphasize the panel's message of the importance of top management and the necessity for a valid scientific foundation in implementing successful FRMS approaches within the field of aviation.