SAFETY
Alaska Accidents

Federal Aviation Administration

FY 2008 Performance Target

"Reduce accidents in Alaska for general aviation and all part 135 operations to no more than 104 per year."

Flight Plan Objective and Performance Target

Objective 2: Reduce the number of fatal accidents in general aviation.

Performance Target: By 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 after FY 2009. The targets for FY 2010-2012 are under development.

	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Target	125	120	115	110	104
Actual	98[1]	128	101[2]	92	

[1] Final result revised from preliminary estimate of 99. Original preliminary estimate was 100, reduced to 99 in Summer 2005.
[2] Final result revised from preliminary estimate of 102 in FY 2008.
[3] Preliminary estimate until May 2009.

Definition of Measure

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

Computation: A count of the number of general aviation and Part 135 accidents in Alaska during the fiscal year.

Formula: N/A

Scope of Measure: This measure includes scheduled and non-scheduled FAR Part 135, as well as general aviation flights, and includes both fatal and non-fatal accidents. This 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 its 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 one pilot. Operating in rough terrain, adverse weather, and in areas of extreme isolation increases the risks to safe flight operations. General aviation operators often use the same types of single-engine airplanes and cope with the same environmental factors as Part 135 operators.

Why the FAA Chooses this Measure

Alaska relies heavily on air transportation in a difficult operating environment. This has led to an unacceptably high accident rate. Reducing accidents in Alaska will have an outsized effect on reducing Part 135 and general aviation accidents system-wide.

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 use a fatal accident rate in FY 2010 rather than the number of fatal accidents as the performance measure because the use of a rate measure will take into account variation in activity levels from year to year.

Also, 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, FAA, working with the General Aviation Manufacturers Association, has made several 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.

Completeness

NTSB and FAA's Office of Accident Investigation meet regularly to validate information on the number of accidents. Accident data are considered preliminary. 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 May. FY 2007 results will therefore be final after the 2009 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.

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 conducted by FAA Aviation Safety Inspectors without NTSB direct involvement. FAA's own accident investigators and other FAA employees participate in all accident investigations led by NTSB investigators.