



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

SAFO

Safety Alert for Operators

SAFO 12003
DATE: 7/9/12

Flight Standards Service
Washington, DC

http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/info

A SAFO contains important safety information and may include recommended action. SAFO content should be especially valuable to air carriers in meeting their statutory duty to provide service with the highest possible degree of safety in the public interest. Besides the specific action recommended in a SAFO, an alternative action may be as effective in addressing the safety issue named in the SAFO.

Subject: Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) Part 135 Certificate Holders and Part 91K Program Managers

Purpose: This SAFO reminds part 135 certificate holders and part 91K operators of the criticality of using SOPs during all phases of flight.

Background: In July 2008, A Hawker Beechcraft Corporation 125-800A series airplane operating under the provisions of part 135, crashed while executing a go-around attempt after an aborted landing. Two pilots and six passengers were killed and the airplane was destroyed by impact forces. The subsequent accident investigation has revealed that deviation from SOPs was determined as a contributing factor.

Discussion: There have been documented cases where accidents or incidents have resulted either directly from or were related to a failure by the flight crew to follow SOPs, particularly during critical phases of flight. SOPs are written, tested procedures that are applied uniformly and consistently within an organization and involve all aspects of flight, both normal and non-normal. SOPs are widely recognized as a basic element of safe aviation operations and are an area of special interest and concern within the FAA. SOPs may be individually developed by the operator or by incorporating those procedures found in their aircraft operating handbooks into their daily operations. Regardless of how an operator chooses to incorporate SOPs into their operations, those SOPs should serve to provide a consistent, standardized mental model of each task that must be performed by each crewmember during each phase of flight and during any reasonably anticipated emergency situation. Once established and approved, the SOPs must be applied with consistency and uniformity throughout the organization. In addition it is imperative that part 135 certificate holders and 91k operators cultivate a culture of adherence to the SOPs. This applies to single-pilot operations as much as to multi-crewed aircraft. It is important that each operator is aware of the criticality of developing and/or incorporating effective SOPs specific to their operations and aircraft, and of keeping those SOPs current and updated where applicable. Any changes to SOPs must be coordinated with, and accepted or approved by, the operator's principal operations inspector (POI).

Recommended Action: Part 135 certificate holders and part 91K program managers should carefully review Advisory Circular (AC) 120-71A and other related guidance to ensure that they have in place effective and current SOPs for all phases of their operations. In addition, ensure that flightcrew members understand the importance of adhering to SOPs.

Contact: Questions or comments regarding this SAFO in relation to part 135 operations should be directed to the Part 135 Air Carrier Operations Branch, AFS-250, (202) 267-8166. For part 91K operations, questions or comments should be directed to the Commercial Operations Branch, AFS-820, (202)-385-9600.