

## AFS Safety Assurance System: What's Next in Oversight

### **What is SASO and the Future State?**

Current FAA oversight processes have contributed to an outstanding safety record. However, as we strive to make the skies as safe as possible and anticipate future needs and challenges, the FAA must re-evaluate its approach to safety oversight. Through the **System Approach for Safety Oversight (SASO) program**, the **FAA aims to improve safety beyond current levels by instituting a risk-based approach**. This new approach will first be applied to 14 CFR Parts 121, 135, and 145 by systematically evaluating the health of a certificate holder or applicant's systems to determine their ability to operate safely.

### **What is the AFS SAS?**

Flight Standards' (AFS) **Safety Assurance System (SAS)** refers to the combination of people, processes, and technology that will constitute AFS's safety assurance capability. Based on the capability, configuration, and effectiveness of a certificate holder's systems, the SAS will help the FAA adapt how oversight is conducted. This new approach will allow the FAA to focus its attention on areas in the aviation system presenting the highest degree of risk. The SAS will also provide necessary decision-support tools that will help the workforce execute safety oversight processes.

This combination of people, processes, and technology not only seeks to increase safety, but also aims to assure that Flight Standards and certificate holders both meet their separate responsibilities in accordance with 49 USC and FAA policy.

The implementation of the AFS SAS helps fulfill Flight Standards mission elements in the areas of certification, surveillance, and resolution of safety concerns.

### **How is the AFS SAS being designed?**

To develop the AFS SAS, the SASO Program Office is bringing together numerous internal and external groups to design processes and tools to support risk-based oversight. Collaborative workgroups - which include participants from field offices and headquarters divisions - are working to provide, review, and verify information for the SAS. Participants in these workgroups reflect AFS's diverse organization with members from different job roles and geographic locations. The workgroup activities began in November 2008 and will continue through September 2009.

### **System Safety Basics What Are Hazards and Risks?**

- A **hazard** is any real or potential condition that can result in injury, illness, or death to people; damage to, or loss of, a system, equipment, or property; and / or damage to the operating environment
- **Risk** is the composite of the predicted probability and the severity of each possible consequence of each identified hazard

### **Potential Benefits of the AFS Safety Assurance System (SAS)**

- Equips the FAA with tools to assess the health of certificate holders' systems and assures they effectively control and manage risk
- Helps the workforce adapt oversight activities to the operations of an individual air operator or agency
- Aids AFS in providing resources to address areas that pose the highest degree of risk
- Offers the ability to share data, collaborate, and integrate voluntary programs such as internal evaluation and aviation safety action programs

*For questions about the AFS SAS, please contact Rich Abbott at [richard.j.abbott@faa.gov](mailto:richard.j.abbott@faa.gov)*

*For more on SASO, SMS, and SAS, visit SASO online: [www.faa.gov/safety/programs\\_initiatives/oversight/saso/](http://www.faa.gov/safety/programs_initiatives/oversight/saso/)*