

Aviation Safety Program at Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Background

This message is an important one for all members of the ASI team and our students. Ever since our birth, we have routinely heard people tell us to “Be careful!” but this message is far beyond that. Many of us have taken Aviation Safety in your coursework here and you have heard many messages of safety from our flight management team here and your flight instructors. How does the Safety program work here at Southeastern Aviation?

First, what is the definition of aviation safety?

Aviation safety is the study and practice of managing risks in aviation. This includes preventing aviation accidents and incidents through research, educating air travel personnel, passengers and the general public, as well as the design of aircraft and aviation infrastructure. [Wikipedia](#)

Managing Risk

We inherently know that flying involves mitigating known risks as does driving a car, riding a motorcycle, or even riding a bicycle. We all can relate to what results when after some kind of preventable incident or accident, we look back and see that had we been paying attention better, remembered to perform the checklist, or not texting, or had more sleep, or a host of other things, the accident or incident could have been prevented. This is called “Reactive Safety”. We learn a lesson and then move on hoping that we never repeat that behavior again so we never put ourselves at risk again in that manner.

In aviation, this is not good enough. In order to maintain a margin of safety in aviation, we need to get in front of the risks; we need to identify them before they happen and implement safeguards to not only prevent them, but to communicate the information about the risk and its prevention to everyone so that the entire team is aware of a risk and implements a procedure or process change to prevent the accident or incident before it happens. This is called Proactive Safety”. This is what our ASI Safety Program is all about! The airlines and many other industries with discernable risks use a safety process called [Safety Management Systems \(SMS\)](#) to manage their operations to prevent accidents and incidents.

Safety Management System (SMS) at Southeastern Aviation Sciences Institute (ASI)

ASI has an [SMS](#) in place which we all must know and understand. AN SMS consists of 4 Key Areas that can be represented using the following diagram,



The four “pillars” of SMS are:

Safety Policies – This is represented in our SMS manual which is prominently posted on our ASI Portal. The safety policies are also stated in our Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manual.

Safety Risk Management (SRM) – This is where we identify any known risks and calculate their impact. Checklists are built based upon known risks. Our SOP is built upon known risks. FAA regulations are built upon known risks. The fact that our school does not allow our students and instructors to do “Touch and Gos” is an example of this.

Safety Assurance (SA) – This is where we review (audit) our procedures and review incident data and trends to identify if we have done a thorough job. Any findings are resubmitted to the SRM phase to perform the analysis again.

Safety Promotion – This is where we use Safety Stand-downs, safety posters, safety training, messages like this to all personnel, and have products like our “Aviation Portal” to advertise and promote safety at all costs.

The Incident Reporting System

We also have a safety reporting system built right into our Talon ETA system that allows us to report ANYTHING that we see that is a risk as well as reporting incidents. This system is called TalonSMART.



You click on this “Caution Symbol” anywhere in Talon ETA and you get to an Incident reporting screen that looks like this:



You can also click on the following link in the portal or from any browser and it will also take you directly to the incident reporting screen. <https://talonsystems.com/sosu/sms>



What and When to Report

What kind of Incidents should be reported?

Anything you see or anything that happens that is out of the ordinary that could either create or did create a risk for you, another pilot, the aircraft, or any ground or staff personnel.

Things like:

- Aircraft cut you off in the pattern
- An aircraft did not use the radio in the pattern
- Suddenly seeing another aircraft fly past you
- Bird or wildlife encounters
- Forgetting to report on the radio at an airport
- The tower at Ardmore or North Texas Regional scolded you or asked you to call them
- Someone entered the pattern from the wrong direction
- Accidentally getting too low while performing practice maneuvers
- A hard landing
- Locked up the brakes and it flat-spotted the tire
- Witnessing an unsafe act on the flight line or in the pattern
- Observing a fire hazard in the hangar
- Witnessing someone moving an aircraft unsafely
- Forgetting to turn the Master Switch off
- Leaving the keys in the ON position and exiting the aircraft
- Witnessing improper fueling of an aircraft
- Spilling fuel on the ground
- Forgetting to secure the oil cap
- Forgetting to secure the fuel cap
- Finding tools or hardware left on the floor of the aircraft
- Tripped over cords or air hoses in the hangar that were in the red-line walk-way
- Accidentally backing an aircraft into another aircraft, the hangar, or shadeport

What not to Report?

In general, we do not report aircraft “squawks” through the SMS incident reporting system. We have another process for that.

If however we get to an aircraft and find something broken, dented, hanging down, oil dripping underneath, or other things that we notice that were not reported from a previous flight, this might well be a reportable incident! If in doubt, ask a staff member or instructor!

Self-Reporting and Reporting Someone Else

It is all of our responsibility to report what we see to prevent someone from getting hurt. We also are encouraging you to report yourself or others. What, did I say that??? Yes, I did! All airlines and SMS operators are encouraged to report anything they see whether it was someone else or themselves including managers, mechanics, instructors, and staff. In a true SMS, we have what we call a “Safety Just Culture”. This means that if you report something or even report yourself, we commit to not punishing you for the incident or accident. The only time in a Just-Culture that punishment is warranted is when the act was intentional, mischievous, or flagrantly negligent in nature. For example, someone



intentionally loosens an oil cap to cause someone else harm or someone purposely breaks a rule in the SOP, someone flies low over the campus or someone's house, or flies low over the lake, etc.

Note: You can see that this SMS program and the safety procedures we are asked to follow apply to everyone. That is from management all the way down to students. No one is immune from using the system and no one is immune from following the rules. This begs the question: What if you see a manager or a mechanic or a flight instructor doing something unsafe? The answer is that an SMS is a just culture. Everyone is treated equally under the SMS and when someone makes an honest mistake and it is reported, there is no repercussions to the person who reported it whether themselves or someone else. If someone sees me doing something, I would expect them to file an incident. Let it be investigated. Let the findings speak for themselves! For the person who made the mistake, it is our job to educate them as to what they did and provide whatever remedial training may be necessary to get them back on track, and once we are comfortable that the person is prepared to return to normal operations, they are released. Simple as that.

Conclusion

Safety at Southeastern is everyone's business. It is our responsibility to conduct operations safely and to identify and report unsafe conditions or acts immediately to prevent anyone from getting hurt or damage to our property. If you are unsure about something, come to a staff member. No one should ever be trying to cover up an incident. This would **not** be a just culture behavior, this is a behavior born of fear and would never be accepted in an airline. When we communicate an act, we will always deidentify the person, instructor, or staff member and turn it into a learning lesson. That is our job and our mission.
