

IEP CHECKLIST

A SAFETY ASSURANCE COMPONENT OF YOUR SMS

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April 2025

Operations 3.

Flight Operations (PART 135)

All flight operations policies and procedures are relevant, comprehensive, reflect the current scope of operations, and are effectively utilized by all applicable flight operations employees. Operations managers are aware of mission requirements and demands, supervise with sufficient oversight, and employ risk management in daily activities. Employees are sufficiently empowered to perform assigned duties and responsibilities, are encouraged to report errors and strive for continuous improvement. Specific operational issues such as mountainous airports, winter operations, and TCAS RA procedures are adequately addressed.



PART 135



1. Does the organization have established written procedures defining communication of essential information between management, flight crews, and schedulers/dispatchers?

(IS-BAO 3.4.2; ARGUS Platinum 1.8.4; NBAA Management Guide 1.3.2)

(Communication) Communication between management and flight crew can be formalized in the form of bulletins, read files, and email. Requirements that define exactly what information is made available to flight crews and how it is accessed prevents knowledge gaps and increases awareness. Additionally, regular formalized meetings should be scheduled with open discussion between operations employees and managers. Dispersed portions of the operation are included in communication methods, as applicable.

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2. Are operations personnel receiving safety and operational information in a timely manner?

(FAR 135.81-83; IS-BAO 13.2, 13.4, 14.2; ARGUS Platinum 1.8.4, 7.2 & 7.3; NBAA Management Guide 1.1.3.1, 2.1.10)

(Communication) Examine the availability of emerging information as crews prepare for departing flights. NOTAMs and Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) can be time sensitive and must always be available. This information must be current for each departing flight. Examine the procedures used to ensure schedulers/dispatchers and crews are provided with current essential flight information before flight release. If the PIC is responsible for flight release, how is information gathered and analyzed remotely?

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3. Do all operations employees have adequate training and knowledge of the content of company Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)?

(FAR 135.21; IS-BAO 8.1.3.1 & 13.1; ARGUS Platinum 5.2.3.a; NBAA Management Guide 2.1.4 & 2.1.11)

(Training) Part of company indoc for operations personnel should include SOP review. All operations personnel must have working knowledge of any SOP pertaining to their respective position in the organization. SOPs shall be in accordance with the current revision of the manufacturer's checklists, AFM or RFM, as applicable. There needs to be SOPs for each aircraft type operated. Schedulers must be well versed in company fatigue procedures, for example. Periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of SOP training and employee knowledge should be conducted as a validation.

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4. Are formally approved checklists provided to the crew? Do crews receive initial and recurrent training on the use of checklists?

(FAR 135.83; IS-BAO 8.1.3.1.c.i, 13.1.2, 14.2.1.d; ARGUS Platinum 5.2.3.a, 5.2.7, 7.1.1.b, 7.1.2; NBAA Management Guide 2.1.11)

(Training) Normal, abnormal, and emergency checklists need to be established for each aircraft type operated, approved by the State CAA, and provided to the flight crew. Flight crew members must utilize the checklists in the performance of their assigned duties. If training is conducted by a third party then there needs to be processes to ensure instructors use the latest version of the company checklists when conducting initial and recurrent training for air crews.

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5. Assess the process for conducting compatibility evaluations and/or risk assessments for any various types of flight operations and airports. How is this assessment documented?

(FAA AC 120-92D; IS-BAO 3.2.1.1, 3.2.2, 6.3.2, 13.2; ARGUS Platinum 1.6.1, 1.6.9, 3.1.3, 7.2.4.a, 7.4.1.a; NBAA Management Guide 1.1.4.2, 1.3.2)

(Documentation) Before scheduling, and commencing a flight operation, it must be assured that the planned flight is compatible with existing requirements and limitations. There must be evidence of an established risk management process that is designed to eliminate or mitigate risk. This is particularly important when new operations (new airports, new area of operations, etc.) are commenced. Flight risk analysis forms are a commonly used method of consistently assessing individual flight events but cannot take the place of an in-depth risk assessment when one is required.

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6. Are the materials and equipment used for passenger safety briefings functional and current? Has a passenger safety briefing for special circumstance passengers been developed?

(FAR 135.117; IS-BAO 13.8; ARGUS Platinum 7.8; NBAA Management Guide 2.1.8)

(Documentation) Pre-recorded briefings or cards should be reviewed and kept up-to-date. Cards must have the current location of cabin emergency equipment. Ensure flight crew members are always briefing passengers and using the correct materials/equipment consistently. The pilot-in-command shall ensure that passengers are given a safety briefing appropriate to the passengers' needs.

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7. Is the company culture such that flight crews feel free from undue pressure and are allowed to use their judgment along with standard operating procedures in decision making and the execution of their duties?

(IS-BAO 3.1.1.1.b; ARGUS Platinum 1.2.1.b; NBAA Management Guide 2.1.9)

(Organizational) Unhealthy safety cultures exists when schedulers/dispatchers and pilots fear reprisal from management for making operational decisions. Is this topic covered in company policies, Operations Specifications (Ops Specs), or General Operations Manual (GOM)? Are all pilots and managers aware of these policies, and most importantly does reality match policy? A good way to analyze organizational pressures on flight crews is to ask questions. The impressions provided will indicate the perception the organization has created, for better or worse.

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8. Are destination airports assessed for risk as part of the scheduling process? Are risk controls established for airport locations where risk levels are high? How is this accomplished, and by whom?

(FAR 135.23(r), IS-BAO 3.2, 13.2, 13.5; ARGUS Platinum 1.6, 7.4, 7.10.7-7.10.9; NBAA Management Guide 2.1.7, 2.1.11, 2.1.13)

(Program/Procedures) The local environment, infrastructure and services available at every destination airport should be thoroughly evaluated in advance. This should not be a preflight evaluation, but be done well before departure to alleviate any last minute challenges. These risk evaluations can be in the form of a standing list of acceptable airports or an exceptions list, for example. The scheduling process must have risk controls that define acceptable airports and associated conditions. SOPs should contain special procedures for high risk airports that lower risk to an acceptable level.

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9. Is a review/revision process in place for the company's General Operations Manual? Is there an established formal method for submitting suggested changes to this manual and any associated SOPs?

(FAR 135.23; IS-BAO 6.2.1; ARGUS Platinum 3.1; NBAA Management Guide 1.1.3.1)

(Program/Procedures) Examine the frequency the GOM/SOP is reviewed; these reviews must be documented. Are the manuals up-to-date for the current scope of the operation? Do the manuals contain out-dated information? The GOM and SOP should be completely aligned with one another and company safety policies. Are all suggested changes well documented and tracked for review and evaluation, and revision control maintained? Applicable personnel must be informed of any changes to manuals.

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10. Is reduced braking guidance documented in the GOM/SOP and provided to flight crews? Winter operations guidance?

(FAR 135.4(a)(3), 135.345 (b) (iv); IS-BAO 13.2.12, 13.3.2, 13.5.5; ARGUS Platinum 7.2.9)

(Program/Procedures) Are flight crews guided by a company policy regarding flight operations on runways with a reported braking action of fair, poor, or nil? Manual guidance should include a braking action measurements chart. Braking action guidance is especially pertinent during winter operations; de-icing/ anti-icing procedures must be clearly defined in company manuals as well.

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11. Is there documented company guidance regarding the resetting of aircraft circuit breakers? Is this guidance consistent with the aircraft manufacturer's recommendations?

(ARGUS Platinum 7.10.3)

(Program/Procedures) Whether your company's stance is to allow for a "cool-off period" before resetting a tripped circuit breaker or to allow only one opportunity for crew to reset a breaker, it is important to standardize the decisions regarding the resetting of an aircraft circuit breaker. Although it is impossible to create policy regarding every possible situation, flight crews should be provided with guidance.

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12. Is there documented flight crew guidance for mountainous terrain airports and GPWS alerts?

(FAR 135.154; IS-BAO 13.2.2.2; 14.3.1 ARGUS Platinum 7.2.4.a, 7.10.4, 7.10.7; NBAA Management Guide 2.1.4, 2.2.8)

(Program/Procedures) Specific guidance for these operations can reduce CFIT risk. It should not only include designated mountainous airports specific to your operation, but possible alternates. The operational limitations should be clearly documented, for example "day VFR" restrictions into a mountainous airport. Additionally, standard crew responses to GPWS alerts should be outlined in the GOM/SOP along with CFIT escape maneuvers.

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13. Is documented guidance provided to crewmembers standardizing responses to TCAS alerts?

(FAR 135.180; ARGUS Platinum 7.10.5; NBAA Management Guide 2.1.4, 2.2.8)

(Program/Procedures) There should be guidance for TCAS directed maneuvers, activation policies, and maneuvering action. If TCAS I and II are both utilized, differing response procedures should be defined.

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14. Is there clear, documented guidance for flight crews and ground personnel regarding the use and preservation of data from Cockpit Voice Recorders (CVR) and Flight Data Recorders (FDR)?

(FAR 135.151-135.152; IS-BAO 4.1.4.f, 13.6.4.1; ARGUS Platinum 7.10.1, 7.10.12; NBAA Management Guide 2.2.8)

(Program/Procedures) Initial and recurrent training programs should review the proper operation and preservation of CVR/FDR information. Operators are responsible for training flight crew and ground personnel on any specific aircraft differences concerning the disabling of a CVR/FDR and the consequences of doing so incorrectly. Over-written data is one of the largest reasons for loss of information on a CVR, according to the NTSB.

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15. Is there a documented fatigue counter measures program that defines rest and duty parameters for flight crews and other personnel such as schedulers and dispatchers? Is deviation approval authority defined?

(FAR Subpart F (135.261-135.273), FAR 135.330(a)(6); IS-BAO 12.0; ARGUS Platinum 6.1.1, 6.2.1; NBAA Management Guide 1.1.3.1, 2.1.6)

(Program/Procedures) Do the crew scheduling policies cover part 91 and 135 operations? If limitations of flight and duty times are exceeded, are those cases documented? The fatigue countermeasures program employed must be based on a risk assessment conducted specific to the operation. Training on the subject of fatigue should be conducted periodically to maximize employee awareness. In situations where a deviation from policy was required evaluate the established waiver process was followed correctly.

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16. Are thorough procedures defining extended diversion time and or Polar operations documented (if applicable)?

(FAR 135.98, FAR 135 Appendix G; IS-BAO 13.2.9)

(Program/Procedures) These procedures must account for the unique requirements and demands present when operating over extended ranges. Extensive, descriptive procedures should be in place to guide flight planning and execution. Suitable emergency divers, decision point calculations, and emergency escape routes should all be addressed.

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17. Are there specific procedures defining the use of aircraft oxygen in compliance with FAA requirements?

(FAR 135.89, 135.91, 135.157; IS-BAO 13.2.9, 13.6.1; NBAA Management Guide 2.1.11)

(Program/Procedures) Procedures describing exactly how the requirements are executed will standardize the flight crews. These procedures should be clearly described in the GOM/SOP. This also includes the use of medical oxygen for passengers.

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18. Are there adequate procedures, training, and provisions for international operations (if applicable)?

(FAR 135.81, 135.345; IS-BAO 8.1.3.1.c.vii, 13.1.1.b, 13.2.1.4, 13.2.1.5, 13.3.6.1, 13.4, 13.8.4, 14.1.2, 14.2.1.o; ARGUS Platinum 5.2.3.g, 7.6.1, 7.14; NBAA Management Guide 2.1.4, 2.2)

(Program/Procedures) Flight crews and schedulers must be familiar with the various rules and requirements of international airspace and operations. An international publications library or similar access can be a valuable resource.

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19. Is a runway heading line-up check outlined in company SOPs and are flight crews aware and standardized on this procedure?

(FAA SAFO 07003; ARGUS Platinum 7.10.6)

(Program/Procedures) In the wake of the 2006 Comair accident in Lexington, Kentucky, the FAA has recommended crews perform runway heading line up checks prior to each take-off. Flight crew should use available resources, such as the HSI, FMS, and ATC to confirm their position. SOPs should be aircraft specific, and all available resources should be used to confirm and cross-check their location is at the assigned departure runway before crossing the hold-short line, and again in the takeoff position.

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20. Are there defined procedures for takeoffs from runways where no takeoff minima are specified?

(FAR 135.225(h); IS-BAO 13.5.1.d; ARGUS Platinum 7.2.1, 7.4.1; NBAA Management Guide 2.1.12.1)

(Program/Procedures) Procedures need to be in place to prevent takeoffs from airports where a safe return in the event of an emergency can't be accomplished. A risk analysis should be performed and operators shall specify a procedure in their operations manual for the determination of take-off minima, where no take-off minima are specified.

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21. Is the final reserve fuel value published for each aircraft type in the fleet?

(IS-BAO 13.2.5)

(Program/Procedures) It is recommended that operators determine one final reserve fuel value for each aircraft type and variant in their fleet and round the number to an easily recalled figure. A fuel monitoring procedure should be added to the OM requiring the PIC to continually ensure that the amount of usable fuel remaining on board is not less than the fuel required to proceed to an aerodrome where a safe landing can be made with the planned final reserve fuel remaining upon landing. There should also be a policy on declaring an emergency when the calculated usable fuel predicted to be available upon landing at the nearest aerodrome where a safe landing can be made is less than the planned final reserve fuel.

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22. (If applicable) Assess the thoroughness of the EFB implementation, including the associated change management process involved with an EFB transition. Are procedures clearly outlined and flight crews trained?

(FAR 135.144; FAA AC 120-76E; IS-BAO 8.1.3.1.c.iii, 14.5; ARGUS Platinum 5.2.3.c, 7.10.2; NBAA Management Guide 2.1.15)

(Program/Procedures) Depending upon the type of EFB, the implementation process will differ. There must always be, however, a program for usage developed, and non-interference verified as per FARs. Training should include ground, simulator, and flight if necessary in order to adequately prepare flight crew for EFB usage. Managing EFB updates to ensure current charts are used is a critical part of implementation.

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23. (If applicable) Review the Category II or III operating procedures established in the company manual, and compliance with the associated training requirements.

(FAR 61.67, 61.68; 135.111; FAA Order 8400.13F; IS-BAO 13.5.4; ARGUS Platinum 7.5.1; NBAA Management Guide 1.3.4, 2.1.11)

(Program/Procedures) A periodic review of the flight crew training and certification program should be conducted to ensure its effectiveness. Ensure the requirements for this category certification are tracked and documented, and applicable aircraft are properly maintained to meet the FAA requirements.

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24. Evaluate current RNP, MNPS, RNAV, and RVSM company procedures and processes to ensure regulatory requirements are met.

(FAR 135.165, 125.203(c); FAA AC 90-96A, FAA AC 90-105A; IS-BAO 13.2.13; ARGUS Platinum 7.14.5, 7.2.3, 7.6; NBAA Management Guide 2.1.3, 2.2.6, 2.2.7, 2.2.8)

(Program/Procedures) Review the procedures for height monitoring requirements, and ensure the criteria are met. A training program for RVSM operations is required. Ensure flight crews are familiar with the requirements for operating in MNPS, RNP, and RNAV airspace. A process should be in place to ensure the aircraft system, airworthiness, and authorization by the FAA is maintained on applicable aircraft.

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25. Are there documented procedures for conducting maintenance check flights? Are crews trained in the appropriate procedures?

(IS-BAO 13.9; ARGUS Platinum 7.13; NBAA Management Guide 3.6)

(Program/Procedures) Maintenance check flights are vital to insuring safe, reliable, and airworthy aircraft; however, they are typically associated with an above average risk of an accident or serious Incident. How these flights are conducted, who conducts them, exactly what is to be accomplished on these flights, and how it is to be accomplished, are major issues that must be addressed by any organization that conducts maintenance check flights. A recognition that a specific process is needed for the selection and training of flight crew who are to perform this type of flight is essential. Consideration should also be given to items such as minimum/maximum crew, weather requirements, and minimum and maximum speeds and altitudes for all portions of the maintenance check flight. A very thorough flight crew pre-flight plan can help reduce the chances of unexpected events occurring in flight through task planning and preparation. There also needs to be documented contingency procedures for addressing inflight abnormalities and emergencies. Flight crews should be trained and able to demonstrate proficiency in executing these emergency procedures.

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26. Is there a policy that defines stabilized approach criteria? Does the policy state when go-arounds or missed approaches are required to be executed by the flight crew?

(FAR 135.93; IS-BAO 13.7, ARGUS Platinum 7.9; NBAA Management Guide 2.1.13)

(Policy) Conducting a stabilized approach increases the flight crew's overall situational awareness. A stabilized approach is one in which the pilot establishes and maintains a constant angle glidepath towards a predetermined point on the landing runway. Unstabilized approaches are frequent factors in approach-and-landing accidents. An approach is stabilized only if all the criteria in company standard operating procedures (SOPs) are met before or when reaching 1,000 feet above airport elevation in IMC and by 500 feet above airport elevation in VMC. Go-arounds or missed approaches should be required to be executed when the aircraft deviates outside the defined company criteria for a stabilized approach unless the deviation is operationally required and has been previously planned and briefed.

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