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SAFETYWIRE

Keys to Creating an Effective Safety Standdown

(**Source:** Business Aviation INSIDER, May/June 2026)

According to a 2023 report by global loss-adjusting company McLarens, 64% of worldwide aviation incidents occurred on the ground, including collisions with vehicles during taxiing and towing, so-called "hangar rash" and runway incursions/excursions, just to name a few.

While all of these incidents are not the direct result of procedural errors, too many are. And those are the ones that can be significantly reduced through the learning opportunities offered by business aviation-focused safety standdowns.

> ""When I attend a safety standdown, I take the key points I've picked up and share them with our other flight crews. Some of those topics have been the implementation of FAR-required SMS programs, strategies for preventing runway incursions and excursions, and loss of control inflight.""
>
> **KEITH WOLZINGER** *Captain, Paragon Airways / Bombardier Safety Standdown Keynote Speaker*

"Safety standdowns started in the U.S. military as a reaction to major accidents or other issues that needed immediate attention," explained Keith Wolzinger, captain for Part 135 operator Paragon Airways, and Bombardier Safety Standdown keynote speaker. "In the military, there are no flight operations during standdowns, but in the civilian world, we can't stop so that everyone can attend meetings.

“When I attend a safety standdown, I take the key points I’ve picked up and share them with our other flight crews,” Wolzinger said. “Some of those topics have been the implementation of FAR-required SMS programs, strategies for preventing runway incursions and excursions, and loss of control inflight.”

> “Safety standdowns are becoming increasingly beneficial in today’s business aviation environment because we are in a total system of safety – one that demands integration across complex systems, technologies and operational environments.”
>
> **ROBERT BERGEN** *Global Head of Training at CAE*

Increasingly Beneficial

These kinds of safety events remain extremely relevant, especially in a huge, international industry that literally relies on safe operation. “Safety standdowns are becoming increasingly beneficial in today’s business aviation environment because we are in a total system of safety – one that demands integration across complex systems, technologies and operational environments,” said Robert Bergen, global head of training for CAE.

“They serve as a dedicated occasion to step back from routine operations and concentrate on safety protocols,” Bergen said. “This type of proactive initiative enables flight departments to analyze current trends, identify areas for enhancement and develop strategies to foster a stronger safety culture within the organization.”

“Another benefit is the opportunity to talk to other pilots flying similar aircraft in similar situations,” said Wolzinger. “We talk about what they have encountered and what experience they’ve gained. We tend to overlook what we can learn by just talking to other pilots.”

A Chance to Step Back

While business aviation as a whole is highly safety conscious, there is always more to be done.

“With all that’s going on, ‘non-immediate priorities’ tend to get pushed into the background, and that’s where you see a lot of risks start to pile up,” said Cameron McCune, account executive, aviation at Alliant Insurance Services Inc. “A dedicated safety standdown or safety day is the chance to step back and identify where your operational vulnerabilities really are.

“They’re especially called for when you look at the three main root causes of accidents and incidents: overwork, fatigue and lack of resources,” McCune said. “When you identify all three in your operation, the need for a scheduled standdown is much higher.”

Consider Potential Safety Topics

Every aircraft operation is the sum of countless individual parts. So, which topics or operational areas should a well-developed safety standdown cover?

As a long-time insurance broker for a wide variety of flight operations, McCune has participated in a number of in-house safety standdowns and safety days.

“Every operator has different goals. Overall, though, I think the most beneficial ones are needs-based. For example, this year there have been a lot of presentations on the top issues facing business aviation as a whole – procedural non-compliance, runway incursions and the like,” McCune said. “When we get busy, we can get caught in the paradigm of just pushing things through the operation. We need conscious reminders of the value of following set procedures.”

It’s an excellent idea to spend part of a safety standdown going over your emergency response plan (commonly known as an ERP). Many times, a useful resource for this kind of training is an insurance underwriter.

“I’m the one who helps the flight operators identify their deficiencies and help them put something together for remediation,” explained McCune. “We have a lot of real-world experience with the issues a flight operation might face, like injuries, accidents and fires, and know what the best practices are before, during and after for each situation.

“An operator can go to their insurance carrier for help with putting a safety standdown together, and they can even help incentivize the program,” McCune added. “The best thing you can do is work with your carrier to put an exercise together to meet your specific goals.”

Partner With a Training Provider

Of course, another excellent source for reinforcing safety awareness is your training provider.

“The training provider serves as an important resource for supporting event delivery,” Bergen said. “Flight operations frequently engage multiple training providers, and when the operator hosts the event, each provider has the opportunity to participate or present.

“And as training data becomes more sophisticated, these providers can offer alternate perspectives on safety insights,” Bergen added. “This approach enables diverse perspectives that can further enhance safety.”

> “Just like any recurrent training, safety standdowns should be part of a 12-month training program. If you don’t take time out of your normal schedule and really think about issues, then they get ignored until something bad happens.”
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> **KEITH WOLZINGER** *Captain, Paragon Airways / Bombardier Safety Standdown Keynote Speaker*

Timing Is Important

Being able to take part in these events often comes down to timing.

“Our environment is very dynamic. Situations change. Regulations change. People change. We need to make sure that we are not only compliant, but safe,” Wolzinger said. “So, I’d say that, just like any recurrent training, safety standdowns should be part of a 12-month training program. If you don’t take time out of your normal schedule and really think about issues, then they get ignored until something bad happens.

“The goal of a safety standdown or safety day is to highlight the need for acute aeronautical decision-making that starts with preflight planning and doesn’t end until the passengers are deplaned,” said Wolzinger. “If you include safety in your thought process, then things are far more likely to turn out in your favor.”

And while safety is always worth pursuing, it also helps to know that the time and money invested in attending or hosting a safety standdown is making a real difference.

> "There are always things you can improve on. The most 'resourced' flight departments I've worked with are the ones that come away with the most takeaways from these exercises."
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> **CAMERON MCCUNE** *Account Executive, Aviation, at Alliant Insurance Services Inc.*

"If you think you are doing everything perfectly, then you're not paying attention," McCune said. "There are always things you can improve on. The most 'resourced' flight operations I've worked with are the ones that come away with the most takeaways from these exercises.

"For any operator, I think the most overlooked benefit of these programs is gaining a realistic view of how much their exposure to an accident has built up over the year," McCune added. "No matter how good you are, if you go through your operation in detail, you can spot potential problem areas and take steps to correct them."

Review a list of upcoming industry events, including safety standdowns, at nbaa.org/industry-events.

NTSB Shines Spotlight on Wet Runway Safety - Recommendations follow analysis of 11 runway overruns from 2008 to 2022

(**Source:** Amy Wilder, AIN, May 27, 2026)

Pilatus PC-24

Three new NTSB safety recommendations call for the FAA to make changes to how runway conditions are assessed during heavy rainfall, warning that pilots face a greater risk for overruns under the current assessment system.

These recommendations follow NTSB investigations of 11 runway overrun accidents and incidents from 2008 through 2022 that occurred after landings on wet runways. In nine of these overruns, a shortfall in the measure of the runway's slipperiness—the wheel braking friction coefficient—most likely resulted from moderate to heavy rainfall intensities and the associated increased water depths on the runways. Low runway friction was cited as a causal or contributing factor in eight of the 11 overruns, the report says.

The NTSB recommended that the FAA update its runway condition assessment matrix (RCAM) to account for the progressive decrease in the wheel braking friction coefficient associated with increasing rainfall intensity. Pilots and dispatchers rely on the matrix to determine how much runway is needed to stop after landing on a wet surface.

Also among the recommendations is that the FAA add rainfall intensity descriptors for aviation weather reports “to identify rainfall intensities that can substantially exceed the current heavy rain threshold of 0.3 inches per hour.” In six of the overruns analyzed, rainfall measured between 1.3 and 20 times the rate that triggers a heavy rain designation. The NTSB’s third recommendation calls for the FAA to incorporate the new rainfall descriptors into the RCAM once they are established.

Aviation weather reports top out at “heavy rain” as a descriptor, leaving pilots without terminology to distinguish between rainfall that barely crosses the threshold and rainfall that may be 20 times that rate. The report suggested possible new descriptors, such as “heavy +” or “heavy ++,” allowing the RCAM to assign more nuanced runway condition codes as rainfall intensifies.

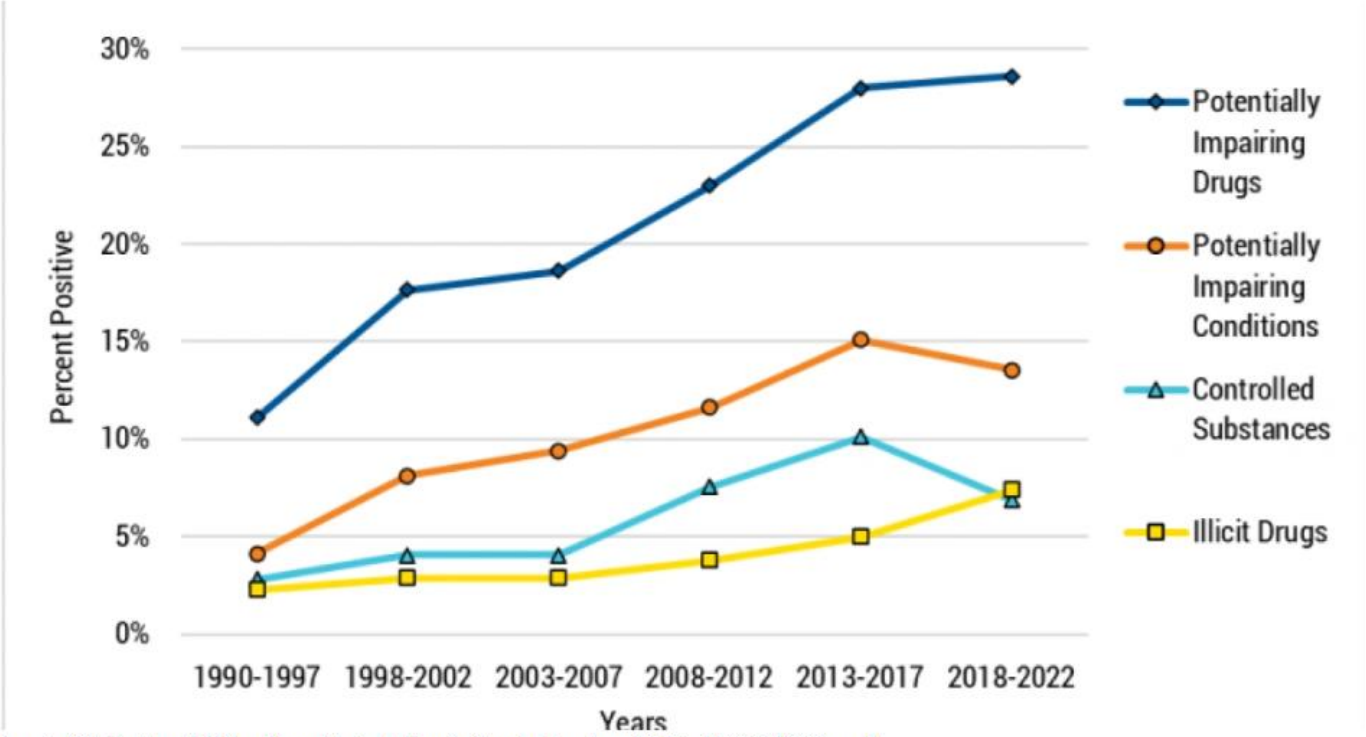
In one of the investigations referenced in the report, the 2019 runway overrun of a Boeing 737 in Jacksonville, Florida, the NTSB determined the probable cause was, in part, “an extreme loss of braking friction due to heavy rain and the water depth on the ungrooved runway, which resulted in viscous hydroplaning.” At the time, rainfall was measuring two to eight times the rate defined as “heavy” rain.

Another example involved a 2016 Embraer Phenom 300 landing overrun in Sugar Land, Texas, where rainfall was recorded at 4.2 to 6.0 inches per hour, between 14 and 20 times the rate that defines heavy rain.

In extreme rainfall conditions, braking capability can deteriorate so severely that landing should not be attempted, the NTSB concluded.

NTSB: Drug Detection Up among Pilots Killed in Accidents - Study examined toxicology results from 2018 through 2022

(**Source:** Amy Wilder, AIN, May 18, 2026)



Percent of fatally injured pilots with positive toxicology findings by drug type, 1990 to 2022 © NTSB graphic

A new NTSB safety research report reveals that 28.6% of pilots killed in aircraft crashes between 2018 and 2022 tested positive for potentially impairing drugs, and 52.8% tested positive for at least one drug of any type, continuing an upward trend. However, drug presence identified through toxicology testing does not necessarily indicate pilot impairment, the report emphasizes. The report adds to similar earlier NTSB studies between 1990 and 2012, and 2013 and 2017.

Among drug categories identified in toxicology reports, the most commonly detected included cardiovascular medications, sedating antihistamines, non-sedating over-the-counter drugs, cholesterol-lowering medications, prostate or erectile dysfunction drugs, and illicit drugs. Overall, 27.7% of pilots killed in aircraft accidents tested positive for two or more drugs.

Detection of potentially impairing drugs increased slightly to 28.6%, with the sedating antihistamine medication diphenhydramine remaining the most detected in this category. Illicit drug detection increased to 7.4%, driven primarily by increases in THC, the primary psychoactive chemical in marijuana.

Drug prevalence varied by pilot age, certification level, and type of operation. Drug presence was lower among pilots conducting Part 135 operations than among those operating under Part 91; among pilots with an active medical certificate versus those without one; and among pilots holding airline transport and commercial pilot certificates than those with a private, sport, student, or no certificate.

SAFETY MANAGER'S CORNER

PRISM SMS: ***New Feature – Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)

PRISM recently released a new feature to PRISM SMS. For added security, Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) can now be enabled within your PRISM SMS account.

What are the benefits of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)?

MFA significantly reduces the risk of hacking and adds additional levels of protection to your PRISM SMS account by ensuring that even if a password is stolen, unauthorized users still cannot access your data.

How does Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) work?

Multi-factor authentication (MFA) is a security process that requires users to provide two or more verification methods to access an account or system. When MFA is enabled in PRISM SMS, each user will be prompted to enter a One-Time Passcode (OTP) that will be emailed to them using their email address that was used to set up their account within PRISM SMS.

Will I have to enter a One-Time Passcode (OTP) every time I log in to PRISM SMS?

Not necessarily. MFA within PRISM SMS is designed to record a successful login and will not require additional authentication unless the local cache or cookies are cleared. MFA is specific to each browser or app on each device. So, if a user logins to PRISM SMS using Chrome on their laptop, it will record the successful login and not require authentication again (until the cache or cookies are cleared); however, if that user tried to login to PRISM SMS from Edge or the app they would be prompted again to enter a One-Time Passcode (OTP).

Does MFA affect offline capabilities within PRISM SMS?

No, offline capability within PRISM SMS is not affected by MFA. Users will be able to continue to login to PRISM SMS and submit reports in offline mode.

How can MFA be turned on or off within PRISM SMS?

If you are interested in adding MFA to your PRISM SMS account, please contact PRISM Support (prism@argus.aero). PRISM Support will enable MFA in your PRISM SMS account. If you would like MFA removed, you can do this at the individual user level within the Account Manager or you can contact PRISM Support to have it disabled for your account.

Quote of the Month

Problems are good, as long as you solve them quickly.

BY: Meg Whitman

Are problems really good? Wouldn't no problems at all be so much better? Go ahead, put your head in the sand and believe that, but to your own detriment. No person or organization is perfect and without problems, a statement beyond reproach. The salient question: are personal attitudes and company culture such that systematic introspection is encouraged and welcome? Several elements of your safety management system exist exactly for that very reason, to examine with a critical eye and root out problems so they can be addressed appropriately. If these problems avoid discovery, you know the bad news, they do not just fade away. No, no; they fester and lie waiting for the most opportune circumstances to emerge. Sometimes they just create an inconvenience and annoyance, and sometimes they explode like a bomb and leave damage in their wake. Embrace the opportunity, hunt those problems down and stamp them out.

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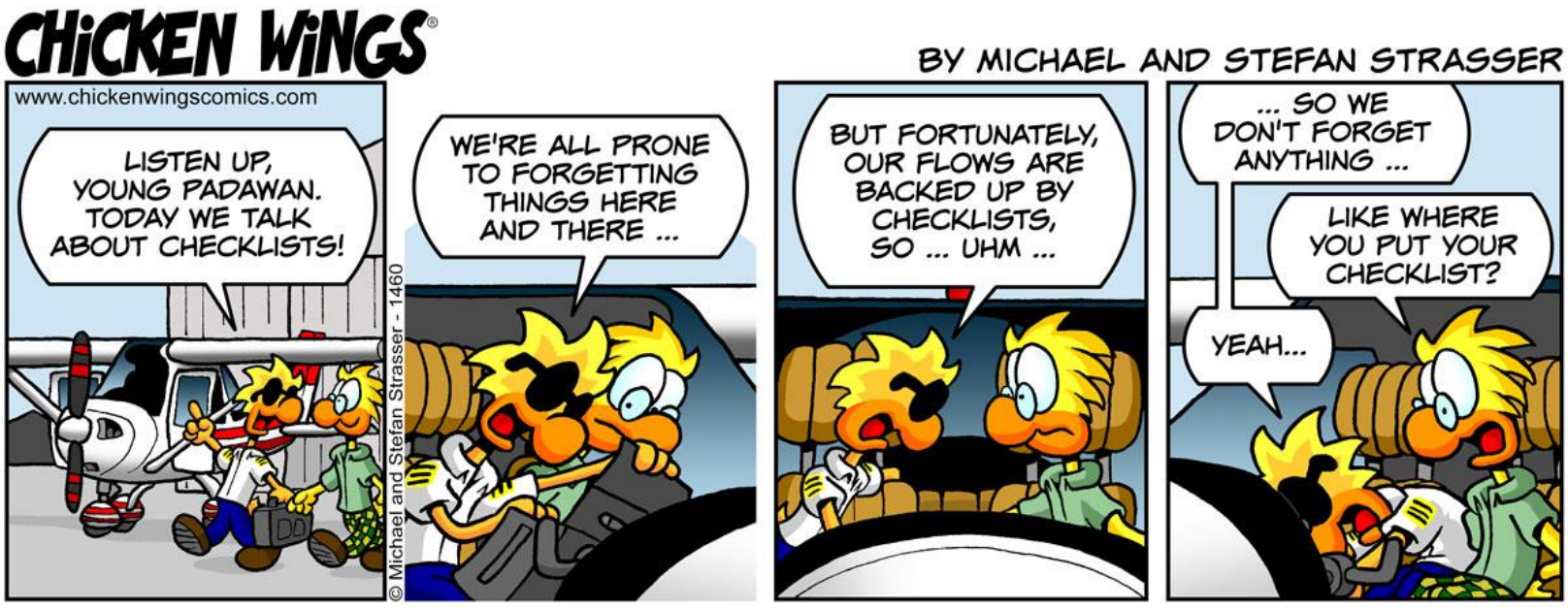

CONTACT LIST

Jenna Albrecht

Jenna.albrecht@prism.aero

Director, SMS Services

Wayne Ehlke

Wayne.Ehlke@prism.aero

Safety Analyst, SMS Services

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#PRISMPREFERS

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SMS Training Course

New York, NY

Jul 27-29, 2026—PROS Course

IOSA Conformance Auditor Training (ICAT)

Virtual

Jul 30-31, 2026—PROS Course

Risk-Based IOSA Training

Virtual

Sept 22-24, 2026—PROS Course

Airline Safety Management System (ASMS)

Virtual

Sept 28-Oct 2, 2026—PROS Course

Aviation Auditor Training (AAT)

Virtual

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+1 513.852.5110
+1 800.361.2216

argus.sales@argus.aero