IEP CHECKLIST

A SAFETY ASSURANCE COMPONENT OF YOUR SMS

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October 2026

Operations 12.

Operational Control & Support (Part 91)

Operational Control and Support: Thorough operational control demands effective communication with crews and the capability to respond to changes, irregularities, or difficulties. There must be clear written procedures for mission preparation and flight following. Crews and those authorized to exercise operational control must have access to adequate weather, flight planning, and maintenance information. The company must have qualified personnel available to respond to the latest developments, make decisions, and provide guidance regarding aircraft performance, maintenance, and emergencies. The organizations different components should maintain the ability to work in concert to resolve emerging problems



PART 91



SCALE OF 1-5

1 – Unsatisfactory
2 – Poor
3 – Meets Minimum Standards
4 – Excellent
5 – Best Practice

If your answer is not a 3 or better, you must record a finding that requires corrective action.

1. The company flight manual clearly describes the release and operational control requirements used for each flight.

(IS-BAO 13.4; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.1)

(Program/Procedures) At a minimum, procedures must include specific descriptions of the release authority for a flight, the flight planning requirements, and flight information retained at the home base. Employees should be thoroughly familiar with these procedures and utilize them on each flight. Reporting requirements for flight monitoring and completion must also be described as a component of operational control. A flight following service is an acceptable monitoring option and can be described as such in the operating manual.

1	2	3	4	5

2. Individuals who are authorized to exercise operational control and can approve flight deviations are clearly designated in the company flight manual.

(IS-BAO 6.3.2 [b], 13.4.1 [a]; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.1)

(Program/Procedures) This typically consists of individuals such as the director of aviation or the chief pilot; however, in the absence of a designated individual with operational control, another qualified individual must be available to perform those duties, with the delegation conditions accurately described. In the smallest operations, operational control may be exclusively a self-dispatch by the PIC.

1	2	3	4	5

3. At least one individual designated with operational control has the responsibility to initiate, conduct, or terminate every flight. They have the prerequisite expertise and training to evaluate flight dependent criteria such as weather, airports, fuel, etc.

(IS-BAO 13.4; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.1)

(Program/Procedures) As a part of flight scheduling and dispatch process, the designated individual must evaluate the crew's qualification for the specific flight event, ensure aircraft and equipment are appropriate for the flight, and all other applicable requirements have been met. This can be the PIC if no other options are available but must be described as such in the company flight manual.

1	2	3	4	5

4. Before release, each flight is verified to be in compliance with company SOPs and all aircraft limitations.

(IS-BAO 13.4.1 & 13.4.4 [b])

(Program/Procedures) Aircraft performance limitations, weather, and other flight preparation details must be verified. If a flight is self-dispatched remotely, the appropriate paperwork is transmitted or deposited for documentation upon return to home base. This paperwork must always include an accurate flight manifest.

1	2	3	4	5

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5. A method for tracking every flight event is in place, even if it is dispatched remotely or there is no IFR flight plan.

(IS-BAO 13.4.4)

(Program/Procedures) Is the flight plan information on file at home base and is flight progress tracked in accordance with company procedures? Both scheduled and repositioning flights must be tracked. Any type of tracking method that is based on documented flight information is appropriate. If there are no direct home base personnel available, consider a relationship with the aircraft maintenance provider or other supporting vendor that allows for flight tracking or maintaining an accurate itinerary at a minimum.

1	2	3	4	5

6. There are defined overdue aircraft procedures that include notifying search and rescue authorities. Flight crews have access to appropriate information concerning SAR services along the route and are provided guidance and procedures on reporting aircraft incidents & accidents.

(IS-BAO 13.4.3, 13.4.4; NBAA Management Guide 4.2.13)

(Program/Procedures) Procedures must be in place for responding to an overdue or unconfirmed aircraft, and other related emergencies. Steps describing specific actions coinciding with specific overdue times facilitate effective actions. The system must be able to provide timely notification of an FAA or search and rescue facility. Coordination procedures for internal notification and with search and rescue authorities must be in place. Aircraft/personnel information must be well organized to inform SAR authorities with accurate information. The PIC shall have access to appropriate information concerning the SAR services in the area over which the aircraft will operate.

1	2	3	4	5

7. There is an established policy describing the role of aircraft owners or company executives as passengers in relation to operational control. The division of authority between owners/ executives and flight crew is unambiguous so as not to impugn operational control.

(NBAA Management Guide 4.1.1)

(Program/Procedures) Measures are in place to ensure the aircraft owner or company executive is not forcing risk decisions based on schedule or travel convenience. This infers the owner is exercising operational control over a flight. Examples could be a company policy statement and/or a passenger briefing card describing the operational control policy.

1	2	3	4	5

8. For multi-piloted aircraft, the PIC and SIC positions are formally designated for each flight.

(IS-BAO 13.4.2 [a]; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.9)

(Flight Crew) This ensures the operational control responsibilities vested with the PIC are not ambiguous, and the duties and regulatory responsibilities of each pilot are defined.

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9. Company policies and procedures clearly establish guidelines defining the operational control authority granted to the PIC. Policy indicating no one in the company can override the PIC's full responsibility for the safety of flight is clearly described.

(IS-BAO 13.2.1.1, 13.2.9; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.9)

(Flight Crew) Ultimately, the PIC has final authority and responsibility for the execution and safety of the flight. This must be unambiguous in the company flight manual. From flight planning requirements to accident notification to recording flight times and aircraft defects, the specific duties of the PIC must be described in detail.

1	2	3	4	5

10. Only qualified crew members are assigned and released on a flight in accordance with company SOPs and state regulations.

(IS-BAO 13.4.2)

(Flight Crew) Appropriately licensed pilots and flight attendants with proper experience must always be used. If your company has flight attendants, they must be appropriately trained for the aircraft and type of mission. This must be verified by the operational control authority before a flight is released. This also includes contract flight crew personnel, without exception. The process used to schedule trips and ensure legal crew and aircraft are used for those trips needs to be documented. If scheduling software is utilized, then the use of the system should be described in the documented process.

1	2	3	4	5

11. For each flight, pre and post departure contact with the flight crew is accomplished.

(IS-BAO 13.4.4 [a]; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.1)

(Communication) There should be in contact with the flight crew before and after the flight. Various verification methods may be used, such as radio, text messaging, email, or phone. No matter what method is used, the information must ultimately and directly reach an employee authorized to exercise operational control, or at a minimum leave an information trail for discovery in the event of an emergency. In situations where operational control rests solely with the PIC, communication with home base personnel for any updates is ideal.

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