






SMALL STEPS TO DEVELOPING A ROBUST SECURITY CULTURE IN AVIATION – FIJI'S EXPERIENCE



Fiji has established a relatively robust aviation security culture which governs the modus operandi of its operators and the aviation community and ensures that security risks are mitigated in a timely manner to prevent acts of unlawful interference against aviation. Unlike safety culture which is more mature and which has been in existence for a longer period of time, aviation security culture has become more prominent lately, following the aftermath of the fateful terrorist attacks of September 11 2001. While the implementation of; and compliance to, aviation security culture varies from operator to operator across the aviation spectrum, it is safe to conclude that Fiji's aviation industry is developing a mature security culture which is relevant to our context, can only get better over time, and remain, fit for purpose. Fiji is relatively secure from acts of unlawful interference. This is due to a number of important factors namely; a low risk factor, a robust safety culture, isolation from main global supply routes and the existence of an increasingly mature security culture. Security awareness training, security specific training and collaboration amongst stakeholders have provided a firm foundation for security culture to thrive. However, there are numerous challenges brought about by advancements in digital technology in the form of cyber security and remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) which require appropriate security responses.



Regulation 17A of the Civil Aviation (Security) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 establishes the need for mandatory occurrence reporting (MORs) to the Authority of specific security incidents or breaches within ninety-six (96) hours of their occurrence. This regulation highlights the importance of developing a good security reporting culture with the objective of not apportioning blame, but to ensure gaps are sealed in a timely manner. Over time it was noted that some reportable security incidents or breaches were not reported out of fear of punitive action or ignorance. In some cases, some operators did not know what type of offences to report. The Authority has sought to address this issue through greater awareness training on why it is critical to develop a robust and just reporting culture. Furthermore, each operator has an internal reporting system to address security incidents or breaches but this reporting system does not guarantee that all reportable security incidents or breaches will be reported to the Authority.





Nevertheless, more operators know the value of reporting and now appreciate the need to report without fear or favor, thus more reports are being received. This reporting culture has now become the norm.

Operators are encouraged to report incidents that involve, according to law, the safety of civil aviation, including serious injury or death arising from aviation activity and acts of unlawful interference.

Apart from these circumstances, operators also report suspicious activities, happenings, persons, including unattended baggage, unattended cargo, unsealed meal carts, unserviceable equipment, insufficient lighting, shortage of manpower, improper screening of persons, no searching of consignments from unknown consignors, amongst a host of issues. There is still a tendency to under report or not report at all.



To be effective, security culture must be part of organizational culture and must be driven by senior management who need to set the example by outlining the organization's security policy, the means to achieve it and by following the security policy. This security policy has to be communicated clearly to all staff so that they understand management expectations and the rationale behind the policy. Staff input and buy in is equally important if the policy is to receive widespread support. There is improvement in the development and documentation of security policy in security programmes.



The Authority conducts aviation security specific training for the aviation industry based on the ICAO Aviation Security Training Packages (ASTP) and other ICAO training material namely airlines, cargo, supervisors, management, risk management, risk context statement, quality control and behavioral assessment based on the TSA training model. Fiji Airports, which is the airport operator also conducts security awareness training for airport stakeholders. The Authority identified the need to extend its security awareness training on a national scale to create greater public awareness. Prior to the resurgence of COVID-19 in April 2021, the Authority was in the process of developing pamphlets and other aviation security material to distribute to the Ministry of Education seeking approval for onward distribution to primary and secondary schools and tertiary institutions.





This initiative has been shelved but the Authority intends to share what it has done in its website and in its interactions with the different operators.

The Authority conducts aviation security audits, inspections, tests and surveys of the different operators within the aviation industry as part of its yearly oversight and continuous monitoring approach. It also conducts investigations and is part of industry organized exercises from time to time. These different quality control activities provide opportunities for the Authority to exchange information with operators and reinforce the importance of having a robust security culture which ensures that established procedures are followed and standards implemented consistently. These quality control activities provide valuable platforms to strengthen security culture.



The primary safety and security legislations for civil aviation are being reviewed and amended to seal gaps, incorporate new ICAO and State requirements and international best practices. Once the draft legislations have been released to the Authority, consultations will begin with the aviation industry and feedback included in the final submission to the Solicitor General's office before finalizing the legislations. It is envisaged that these amended legislations will be robust, fit for purpose and address many of the existing challenges.



A robust security programme is a direct result of an equally good security culture and a good security culture is the product of continuous practice and improvement. The content of operator security programmes in Fiji has improved over time and evolved with a strong focus on the principle, 'document what you do and do what you document'. An important aspect of operator security programmes is that they have a strong focus on prevention and protection of persons and assets from acts of unlawful interference. Operators now have a better understanding of what constitutes a good security programme and good security culture.

Apart from formal aviation security training courses provided by ICAO, TSA, IATA the Authority and other stakeholders, the Authority exchanges security information with the aviation industry on a need to know basis. This ensures that information is shared only with those that have an operational need to know.





It also highlights an important aspect of security culture; there is a limit to what one can share and not all security information can, or should be shared. ICAO, IATA, ACI and other stakeholders like TSA, NZ CAA and other international agencies have assisted Fiji develop a security culture that is acceptable and recognized internationally. This is appreciated.

While Fiji has a relatively robust security culture, there are still many challenges to overcome. A more collaborative approach is required to ensure operators do not work in silos. With frequent changes in senior management positions across the different organisations within the aviation industry, it is critical that the new incumbents receive aviation security awareness training at the earliest opportunity so that they too understand the significance of having a robust security culture, but more importantly, translate this knowledge to practice. There is a need for more practical applications of security culture best practices on the ground by both senior management and staff. There is no better way than that of a good example where staff see senior management actually 'practicing what they preach'. Leading by example sets the right platform, creates confidence and buy in and gives credibility to existing security measures.



Improved coordination and communication are areas that require fine tuning so that security information is received, understood and communicated in a timely manner. There are also plans to reach out more often to members of the public with security awareness programmes. The Authority is working closely with all stakeholders to improve coordination and communication and is optimistic that with more security awareness training, more people will become security conscious, in the process strengthening security culture in every sphere of life.

