

ICAO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

SOURCE ICAO WEBSITE

What is the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP)?

ICAO has performed safety oversight audits within the framework of the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) for well over a decade. The results of these audits allow ICAO to assess Member States' safety oversight capabilities and to generate a more comprehensive analysis of aviation safety, including in terms of its effectiveness and its development.

Have all countries been audited by ICAO?

As of Dec 2016, ICAO has audited 185 Member States, from both the Comprehensive Approach (CSA) and the Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA) cycles. This represents 97% of all Member States having the safety oversight responsibility for 99% of all international air traffic.

What is Continuous Monitoring Approach (CMA)?

CMA enables information regarding the level of safety oversight provided by ICAO Member States to be collected more regularly. This information is provided primarily by States. Safety information is also gathered from relevant external stakeholders, as well as through audits and other USOAP-CMA activities.

Under this new approach, cyclical audits are supplemented with an ongoing process of gathering safety information. This allow stakeholders in international civil aviation to base their decisions on the latest information available. In short, the CMA aims to provide a continuous report of a State's effective implementation of Standards.

What is a USOAP Audit?

Audits are carried out by ICAO to determine Member States' safety capabilities and the status of States' implementation of all safety-relevant ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (found in 17 of the 19 ICAO Annexes), associated procedures, guidance material, and best safety practices.

Audits are tailored to the level of complexity of aviation activities in the State to be audited. Timing, duration of audits, and size and composition of the audit teams, are determined through a review of the information submitted by the State.

What do USOAP audits focus on?

USOAP audits focus on validating a State's capability of performing safety oversight of its industry. The eight audit areas are assessed individually to ensure whether the State has effectively and consistently implemented the critical elements of a safety oversight system. They also determine if the States comply with ICAO's safety-related Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and associated procedures and guidance material. The eight audit areas of a member state's aviation system that the programme monitors are:

1. Primary Aviation Legislation and associated civil aviation regulations
2. Civil Aviation Organizational structure
3. Personnel Licencing activities
4. Aircraft Operations
5. Airworthiness of civil aircraft
6. Aerodromes
7. Air Navigation Services
8. Accident and Serious incident investigations

What is an ICAO Coordinated Validation Mission (ICVM)?

ICAO will perform an ICVM to ascertain whether previously identified safety deficiencies have been satisfactorily resolved by assessing the status of corrective actions or mitigating measures taken by Member States to address protocol findings, including Significant Safety Concerns (SSCs). Simply put, an ICVM is not an audit, but rather a follow up on-site activity to validate progress made by member States in resolving safety oversight deficiencies identified during a previous audit.

What is a Significant Safety Concern?

During the course of an audit, ICAO may identify what is referred to as a 'Significant Safety Concern' with respect to the ability of the audited State to properly oversee its airlines (air operators); airports; aircraft; and/or air navigation services provider under its jurisdiction. This does not necessarily indicate a particular safety deficiency but, rather, indicates that the State is not providing sufficient safety oversight to ensure the effective implementation of all applicable ICAO Standards. Full technical details of the ICAO findings are made available to the State's Civil Aviation Authority to guide rectification, as well as to all ICAO Member States to facilitate any actions that they may consider necessary to ensure safety. The audited State also undertakes to regularly report to ICAO progress on the correction of the safety concern.

If ICAO identifies a Significant Safety Concern during the course of an audit, does it mean that it is unsafe to fly to that country? Or to fly with an airline from that State?

As indicated above, the identification of a Significant Safety Concern does not necessarily indicate a particular safety deficiency but, rather, indicates that the State is not providing sufficient oversight to ensure the effective implementation of all applicable ICAO Standards. It is important to emphasize that ICAO does not directly audit the aviation industry or aviation service providers. ICAO audits focus on the safety oversight capability of the designated governmental authority responsible for civil aviation. For more specific information on the safety of the various components of the State's aviation system (ie the airlines, airports, aircraft or air navigation service providers), the public should refer to applicable travel advisories as may be issued by national or regional authorities.