# Operational Instruction Ref. OI.Security.2019.01
# Air Travel Safety

**Authority:**

ThisOperational Instruction(OI) is promulgated by the Chief of Security, Executive Office, on the basis of adelegation of authority from the Executive Director under OD.ED.2017.01 – Safety and Security of 13 June 2017.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this OI is to clarify the roles and responsibilities on Air Travel Safety in line with OD.ED.2017.01 and as outlined by the UN Security Management System Policy on Commercial Air Travel Safety. The specific processes describing in detail how to manage Aviation Safety shall be included in the Processes and Quality Management System (PQMS) in section 11.2.

**Effective Date:**

This EOI shall be effective **immediately.**

**Promulgation Date:**

03 Apr 2019

**Consequential changes:**

This OI replaces and supersedes OI.Security.2018.02: Aviation Safety with immediate effect.

[signature redacted]

Arve Skog
Chief of Security, Executive Office

# 1. Introduction

**1.1.** UNOPS personnel serve in some of the most challenging environments in the world, often working in difficult conditions while conduction their duties. Air transport is the preferred – and often the only – mode of transport available for reaching some of our duty stations.

**1.2.** For the purposes of this OI, the requirements, responsibilities, aviation risks and aviation safety must be considered within the context of the safety and well-being of our personnel in accordance with the policies, procedures, standards and other arrangements of the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS).

**1.3.** The objective is to ensure that all UNOPS programme/project implementation and operations are managed in the safest possible way and within the guidance outlined in the UNSMS policy on Air Travel.

**1.4.** The primary Air Safety Focal Point (ASFP) on safety for UNOPS is:

Arve Skog
Chief of Security
E-mail Address: arves@unops.org[1]
Office Location: Copenhagen
Phone: +45 4533 7655 1.5.

The alternate ASFP for UNOPS is:

Michaela Pedersen
Head of IPAS administration
E-mail Address: michaelap@unops.org[2]
Office Location: Copenhagen
Phone: +45 4533 7657

# 2. Purpose

**2.1** The purpose of these guidelines is to provide clear guidance to enable the conduct of UNOPS activities, while ensuring the safety, security and well-being of personnel to and throughout UNOPS for official air travel.

**2.2** This OI should be read in conjunction with all existing UNSMS policies. For UNSMS security policies click here.

1. mailto:arves@unops.org
2. mailto:michaelap@unops.org

# 3. Applicability

**3.1** These guidelines are applicable to all Official Duty Travel arranged and covered by UNOPS via air as defined in the OI on Official Duty Travel.

**3.2** This policy does not apply to medical evacuations. For guidance on medical evacuations, please refer to PQMS section 7.5.90.

# 4. Scope of Risk Management

**4.1** Aviation risk management is a part of the Security Risk Management (SRM) process meant to identify, access and manage the safety risks posed to the UN by all air travel.

# 5. Management Organisation Rules/Requirements

**5.1** All ticketing for UNOPS Personnel on official travel is encouraged to be done by the corporate travel system in place that is validating the ticketing in reference to the UNSMS Air Travel Policy (Security Policy Manual, Chapter VII, Section B ). The corporate travel booking system is also validating against the list of UN approved air operators.

**5.2** Office and personnel not purchasing the ticket through the corporate travel system must ensure that the airline meets the UNOPS criteria for ticketing per Commercial Air Travel Safety Policy. This should, if in doubt, be confirmed through the local UNDSS office or by contacting the UNOPS Air Safety Focal Points.

**5.3** The process for routine and non-routine ticketing is covered b the OI on Official Duty Travel.

**5.4** All UNOPS Personnel on official duty travel must comply with the UNSMS policies requiring Security Clearances for travel using the Travel Request Information Process (TRIP) and Security Training. For Trip, click here.

**5.5** Security clearance for travel must be obtained by using the Travel Request Information Process (TRIP) prior to any official duty travel.

**5.6** Offices requiring the use of charter flights must contact the Air Safety Focal Point who will contact the UNDSS Commercial Air Travel Safety Unit (CATSU) and other UN aviation specialists who will provide assistance, as appropriate.

# 6. Definitions

**6.1** Air Safety Focal Point (ATFP): Assigned individuals within UNOPS, who are primarily responsible for responding to questions relating to air travel in accordance with the policy and guidelines of UNOPS.

**6.2.** Security Professional: Under the Framework of Accountability for the UNSMS, the senior-most security professional directly supporting the Designated Official (DO), who can be an agency-assigned professional.

**6.3.** Aviation Safety:For the purposes of this policy, aviation safety is the reliability of an air operator to function without safety-related incident (non-deliberate event).[1]

**6.4.** Commercial Air Operator: An operator, with a valid Air Operator Certificate (AOC) issued by the State of the operator[2], which, for remuneration or hire, provides scheduledor non-scheduled[3] air transport services to the public for the carriage of passengers.

**6.5.** UN Chartered Flights: Air transport procured under contractual arrangement between an air operator and a UN organization for the sole purpose of providing short-term or long-term services to support UN-mandated activities.

**6.6** Donated Flight: Flight provided without charge to one or more UNSMS entities for official travel. Such a flight may be operated by a commercial air operator, by a private operator or by a civilian, government or military entity of a member state.

**6.7** CATSU: Commercial Air Travel Safety Unit in UNDSS who collects and collates information on Aviation Safety.

**6.8** Manager with Signature Authority: The manager entrusted by UNOPS with the authority to weigh the risks associated with air travel against those associated with the delivery of the organization's programme(s), in accordance with the Framework of Accountability for the UNSMS.

**6.9** Official Travel (or Official Duty Travel): Travel as defined by the scope in the OI for Official Duty Travel.

**6.10** Air Charter Agreement: Air charter agreements refer to a contractual arrangement between an air operator and an organisation employing its aircraft, crew and other necessary personnel for the sole purpose of providing short-term or long-term air transport services.

# 7. Passenger Related Issues

**7.1** All Personnel are expected to comply with the safety requirements and briefings provided by the crew on all air operators.

**7.2** The number of UNOPS Personnel permitted to travel in one aircraft is as follows:

i. A maximum of twenty (20) UNOPS personnel may travel on the same aircraft.

ii. As a general principle, for the purposes of business continuity only 50 percent of any office management should travel on the same aircraft. For HQ no more than five senior managers at the regional directors/senior directors' level of above should travel on the same aircraft.

**7.3** In the event that there might be a need to deviate from the above, a request must be forwarded to the ~~Deputy Executive Director~~ Chief Financial Office/Director of Administration and the Director, Regional Portfolios, [REV. 05.05.2020] through the ASFP who may in exceptional circumstances approve the travel.

# 8. Insurance

**8.1** Insurance during Air Travel follows the same policies as any other insurance matter related to personnel conducting UNOPS business; please see the intranet overview for medical insurance, insurance for service incurred incidents and insurance of luggage in relations to air travel insurance.

# 9. Roles and Responsibilities

**UNSMS**

**9.1** Designated Official (DO): Notwithstanding Paragraph 14, in line with the Framework of Accountability, the Designated Official has authority, in emergency situations, such as CASEVAC, evacuation and relocation or security purposes, to approve the use of any commercial air operator or commercially operated donated flight in the interest of ensuring personnel safety and security. Whenever practicable, such approval should be taken in consultation with the Heads of UNSMS entities in-country or their designate(s). In emergency situations, the DO may also contact CATSU directly when urgent information is needed.

**9.2** Security Management Team (SMT) members: To promote coordination, members of the SMT should inform the SMT of their entities' decisions when using an air operator that is not on the recommended list.

**9.3** The most senior security professional advising the DO[4] is the channel of communication between the DO and CATSU. He or she conveys to the DO and the SMT, advice and guidance on the interpretation and application of this policy. He or she refers all issues regarding commercial aviation safety to the CATSU.

**9.4** The Commercial Air Travel Safety Unit (CATSU) in the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS):

i. Serves as a central repository of commercial aviation safety information;

ii. Establishes and maintains a database of aviation safety information from specialized industry sources as well as reports received pursuant to Paragraph 22, regarding commercial air operators;

iii. Conducts analysis taking into account technical advice provided by the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG);

iv. Provides aviation safety information and advice regarding commercial air operators to UNSMS entities; and

v. Collects, analyses and provides information on commercially operated donated flights upon request and as available.

**UNOPS**

**9.5** Manager with Signature Authority: The manager entrusted by UNOPS with the authority to weigh the risks associated with air travel against those associated with the delivery of the organisation’s programme(s), in accordance with the Framework of Accountability for the UNSMS.

**9.6** The Manager with Signature Authority is the UNOPS designated Security Focal Point as the most senior UNOPS personnel based in the country, the Hub Director, Regional Director or Program/Project Manager.

**9.7** The ASFP should, if in doubt, be contacted for clarification on the identification of the Manager with the Signature Authorization and/or to discuss specific requirements and/or other considerations prior to taking a decision on the use of airlines covered by paragraph.

**9.8.** Air Safety Focal Point: Primary point of contact with CATSU and UNDSS on all issues related to Air Travel Safety, responsible for advising the Manager with Signature Authority on the use of Commercial Airlines, Donated Flights and Military Aircrafts.

**9.9.** Personnel employed by UNOPS should report to the CATSU any aviation safety concerns relating to commercial air operators and commercially operated donated flights, either through their respective focal points or through UNDSS Security Professionals.

**9.10.** Notwithstanding the responsibility of Host Governments and the United Nations SecurityManagement System, all personnel also play a role in ensuring their own safety and security and in implementing safe practices with regard to air travel.

# 10. Process and Implications for UNOPS use:

**10.1.** The process for the provision of aviation safety information and analysis of commercial air operators and commercially operated donated flights is as follows:

i. The Commercial Air Travel Safety Unit (CATSU) in UNDSS collects and collates relevant information from specialized industry sources;

ii. The CATSU analyses the information, based on advice provided by the Aviation Technical Advisory Group (ATAG)[5], and establishes a list of commercial air operators that are recommended for official travel of personnel within the UNSMS;

iii. Through the United Nations Security Management Information Network UNSMIN[6], the CATSU communicates the list of recommended commercial air operators to the most senior security professional advising the DO [7] in the field and to the UNOPS ASFP;

iv. The ASFP shares the list with decision-makers when required, and

v. The ASFP can request CATSU to provide information, analysis and advice on the use of specific commercially operated donated flights. Upon request and subject to the availability of information, the CATSU provides such information, analysis and advice.

**10.2.** Taking account of the information and analysis provided by the CATSU, decision-making for the use of a commercial air operator is made by the Manager with Signature Authority after discussions with the ASFP. If the chosen airline is on the UNDSS list of commercial air operators that are recommended for official travel then the travel can go ahead. For circumstances where no recommended commercial air operator exists, Managers with Signature Authority should consider whether:

i. To use existing alternative modes of travel such as road travel;

ii. To avail of an air operator that is not on the recommended list;

iii. Existing UN air assets may be used, subject to availability;

iv. A chartered flight is feasible, taking account of advice from the ASFP and UN aviation specialists involved in the provision of air transport services through air charter agreements; [8]

v. To request the ASFP and thereby CATSU to reconsider the analysis through an expanded technical review; or

vi. To contact the ASFP in order to request CATSU to initiate and coordinate an on-the-ground assessment for required routes, with a view to providing additional information to the CATSU for inclusion in its analyses and recommendations.

**10.3.** The approval for the use of donated aircraft rests with the UNOPS Manager with Signature Authority (see paragraph 6.4.) at the country level, in line with programme criticality. Authorization shall be granted after a Donated Flight risk assessment, using the RMT, has been conducted in conjunction with the Air Travel Focal Points, whereby the assessment does not indicate High Risk or Very High Risk.

**10.4.** The approval on the use of a Donated flight must be elevated to the Regional Directors and the use of a military aircraft to the ~~Deputy Executive Director~~ Chief Financial Office/Director of Administration and the Director, Regional Portfolios, [REV. 05.05.2020] through ASFP.

# 11. Confidentiality

**11.1.** Information and analysis generated by the CATSU in relation to aviation safety is intended for UNSMS use only and is confidential. Such information may be shared with other United Nations recipients and third parties on a need to know basis and provided suitable mechanisms are in place to maintain confidentiality.

# 12. Requirements and Recommendations for Travelers/Passengers

**Fly/Don't Fly Decision**

**12.1.** Having arrived for a flight, personnel may see something that causes them concern. Personnel are fully authorized and expected to refuse to fly, in any circumstance where:

i. It is apparent that usual and typical air travel security standards have been breached;

ii. Personnel have serious concerns about the general safety of the proposed flight.

**12.2.** These concerns may include, but is not limited to the following:

i. The aircraft is clearly overloaded, such as too many passengers for the number of seats or excess baggage and/or freight visible in the cabin;

ii. There is no seat belt available for the seat;

iii. The crew members seem to be impaired.

**12.3.** If time permits, personnel should confer with their line manager, security officer or ASFP prior to the departure of the proposed flight. A written report should be made, as soon as possible afterwards,

to their line manager, with a copy to the ASFP and the UNOPS country Security Focal Point, indicating the deficiencies observed and the action taken by the personnel concerned.

13. Acronyms:

| | |
|---|---|
| AOC | Air Operator Certificate |
| ASFP | Air Safety Focal Point |
| ATAG | Air Transport Action Group |
| CATSU | Commercial Air Travel Safety Unit |
| DO | Designated Official for Security |
| DSS | Department of Safety and Security |
| ICAO | International Civil Aviation Organization |
| TRIP | Travel Request Information Processing |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDSS | United Nations Department of Safety and Security |
| UNSMS | United Nations Security Management System |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

[1] The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) defines safety as “The state in which risks associated with aviation activities, related to, or in direct support of the operation of aircraft, are reduced and controlled to an acceptable level.” Reference ICAO Annex 19 Safety Management and Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme Continuous Monitoring Manual (Doc 9735).

[2] Normally under the direction of a civil aviation authority or equivalent body

[3] Non-scheduled air transport excluding charter.

[4] Principal/Chief/Security Advisers and Country Security Focal Points in their absence.

[5] An inter-agency group established by the General Assembly consisting of aviation specialists from UN Department of Operational Support (DOS) and the World Food Programme (WFP) with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in an advisory capacity.

[6] A web portal accessible to UN managers with security responsibilities and UN security professionals that provides access to UNDSS systems.

[7] Principal/Chief/Security Advisers and Country Security Focal Points in their absence.

[8] The Department of Operational Support (DOS) and the World Food Programme (WFP).