



Federal Aviation Administration

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# A Positive Safety Culture

*A Guide for Agricultural Aviation Operators*

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# 4 Things You Need To Help Create A Positive Safety Culture

## Company Policy

“How we do things.” A written company policy helps state clearly a company's expectations about safety and employee performance. It helps employees understand their responsibilities.

**Example:** Written policy that provides guidance for safely performing hot servicing of aircraft.

## Safety Risk Management

“How we identify hazards and assess risk.” Safety risk management is a company-wide process that enables employees to identify hazards and minimize the risk associated with those hazards. Using this process, management and operations personnel work together to identify risks and suggest solutions to minimize those risks.

**Example:** Written process to identify obstacles (hazards) and establish a spray pattern that avoids them (minimizes risk).

## Safety Assurance

“How we monitor organization performance.” Safety assurance is a process that management uses to track and evaluate how an organization identifies current and future safety problems and how it monitors organizational performance to eliminate those safety problems.

**Example:** Written tracking system that provides guidance for evaluating premature aircraft component failure and for following up with a preventive maintenance plan.

## Safety Promotion

“How we encourage safety throughout the company.” Safety promotion creates a company-wide culture of safety in which management emphasizes safety and rewards it on all levels while discouraging risk. A company's safety culture might promote standard operating procedures that include safety training policies relating to internal communication and information-sharing relating to safety issues.

**Example:** Written policy that requires all pilots to attend the PAASS Program and participate in an Operation S.A.F.E. Fly In.

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# Creating and Maintaining a Positive Safety Culture Requires Management Involvement

## Desire for Safety is Key

A positive safety culture begins with a desire for and a commitment to safety excellence. The culture continues to expand after your organization learns to watch for problems that arise in the normal course of business and to identify trends or areas of concern. Managers dedicated to safety do not take anything for granted. They are ready to meet emerging challenges and resolve the issues safely.

As you begin to develop a safety culture in your company, consider these things.

### Evaluate

Make an honest appraisal of your business or operation using the following safety evaluation parameters:

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Is your company sized properly? Do you have sufficient resources available to meet business goals and customer expectations?  
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Are your operations managed effectively? Have you identified a person with responsibility and authority to be accountable for all your processes?  
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Do your employees know their duties and responsibilities? Are they adequately trained? Have they been tested or evaluated to confirm their knowledge and skills?  
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Do your employees report safety and other important issues to you?  
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Have your operational practices been planned and evaluated for potential hazards? Are they in writing when necessary to ensure standardization?  
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Do you practice risk management at both the company and employee levels? Do you have a process to identify hazards and assess safety impact? Do employees have the authority to make safety decisions?  
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Do you have a plan for responding to emergencies?  
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Does your company have a plan and procedure for monitoring and evaluating performance?  
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Does your company promote safety? Are employees recognized and rewarded for safety performance, including individual acts, ideas, and accomplishments?  
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## Assess and Resolve Serious Safety Issues First

Prioritize. After evaluating your company, assess your most serious safety needs and address them first.  
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Choose improvements that are achievable and work on them first. Small successes can result in surprising payoffs. Think in terms of baby steps that lead to a stride.  
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Seek input from staff and others. You cannot create a positive safety culture alone. Those who perform operational functions are most vulnerable to deficiencies. Their vested interest and buy-in are essential to success.  
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Empower your employees. Make sure they understand your safety expectations and give them the authority to identify hazards and mitigate them when necessary. Let employees know you support their involvement.  
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Consider a nonpunitive employee reporting system that encourages frontline workers to notify management of safety issues and ideas to lower risk.  
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Bring your customers and other business contacts into your circle of safety and work with them to minimize risks.  
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Don't take management skills for granted. Get training and always be ready to learn and improve. Effective management is a core component of a positive safety culture.  
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Have a plan for emergencies. Include the actions and resources necessary after an accident or emergency. Consider how an event will affect operations after the fact and be prepared.  
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Pay attention to compliance with aviation and environmental regulations. Adhere to basic safety practices. They are the foundation of a positive safety culture. Insist on them.  
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## Keep It Simple

When you approach safety management, use terms that you and your employees understand and support. A positive safety culture does not come in one size, shape, or color. It is a reflection of the people and organizations that make it happen every day. It is not a manual sitting on a bookshelf or a framed certificate hanging on the wall. Rather, a positive safety culture lives and breathes in a company's daily work activity.