

## **Benefits of the FAA's Safety Management System Voluntary Program**

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The FAA SMS Voluntary Program (SMSVP) is a way for certificate holders to obtain recognition of their SMS program by the FAA. As part of the program, certificate holders must meet certain requirements which conform to the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) definition of SMS.

### Process Overview:

- a) Preparation Phase
- b) Certificate Management Team (CMT) Validation Phase
- c) Documentation Validation Phase
- d) Performance Demonstration Phase
- e) Administrative Process
- f) Continued Operational Safety (COS)

Effective August 1, 2014, guidance was made available from the FAA's Certificate Management Team to certificate holders who desire to participate in the SMS Voluntary Program.

Certificate holders may develop and implement an SMS in any manner they deem appropriate regarding their operations. However, if FAA recognition is desired, an Implementation Plan must be submitted to its CMT for validation against SMSVP standards.

### SMSVP Standards:

- Safety Policy
- Safety Risk Management
- Safety Assurance
- Safety Promotion

The certificate holder's Implementation Plan is a "roadmap" describing actions needed to conform to the SMSVP Standard.

### The Implementation Plan should include the following:

- a) A listing of the relevant sections of the SMSVP Standard and associated reference sources;
- b) A brief narrative describing where processes conform to the SMSVP Standard, or what actions the certificate holder will take to comply;
- c) Identification of specific employees that will be responsible for implementing required actions;
- d) Estimated target dates that each expectation will be ready for design validation and performance demonstration



The FAA will conduct an SMSVP Initial Workshop for the CMT and the certificate holder to ensure mutual understanding of the program and its requirements.

After the Implementation Plan has been reviewed and accepted, the CMT will establish a validation plan. To develop a viable validation project plan, all parties involved must understand the purpose and use of the design and performance job aids. The CMT will use the

job aids to record and document evidence of appropriate processes, participation, and activities surrounding the certificate holder's SMS.

### Three Types of Job Aids:

Each Job Aid contains specific applications depending on the type of surveillance activity being conducted.

- Design Job Aids – Assist in the evaluation of the process or system design. They will help the CMT determine that the certificate holder's safety management processes maintain conformance to the SMSVP Standards.
- Performance Job Aids – Assist to evaluate the performance of those processes and procedures. The records of these processes are usually centrally located within the organization. For example corrective/preventative actions, management review actions, process changes resulting from the investigation process, audit findings, and corrections.
- Design Assessment Supplements – Used by the FAA inspectors to assess Safety Risk Management functional processes in conjunction with all other technical process inspection job aids. The questions are applicable to multiple employee levels.

Sample: Job Aid

SMSVP Design Validation Job Aid – Policy		
Program Tracking and Reporting Subsystem (PTRS) 1045/3045/5045	Certificate Holder Designator:	Date:
Process Area/Department Application:		
<p><b>SMSVP Performance Demonstration References:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety Policy - Attachments 8</li> <li>• Emergency Preparedness - Attachment 7</li> <li>• Evaluation Process - Attachment 11</li> <li>• Continuous Improvement - Attachment - Attachment 13</li> <li>• Accountable Executive Review Process - Attachment 14</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Scope and Purpose:</b> (certificate holder's responsibility)</p> <p><b>To:</b> Develop a Safety Policy that is the certificate holder's documented commitment to safety, which defines its safety objectives and the accountabilities and responsibilities of its employees in regard to safety.</p> <p><b>Safety Policy:</b> The safety policy (documentation) will define and commit the organization to achieving safety objectives.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> (FAA oversight) To determine if the certificate holder's SMS safety policy, as a documented set of processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complies with the SMSVP Standard including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety accountability and authority</li> <li>• Designation and responsibilities of required safety management personnel</li> <li>• Coordination of emergency response planning</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

After the process has started, the certificate holder is required to make steady progress towards full SMS implementation and continuous improvement. Three categories denote the progress expected:

- SMSVP Active Applicant – The certificate holder and CMT have committed to sufficiently support the SMS implementation and validation processes.
- SMSVP Active Participant – The certificate holder officially begins and maintains its implementation efforts

- SMSVP Active Conformance – Acknowledgement of full implementation of the certificate holder's SMS. Continuous improvement is expected.

### What are the benefits of participating in the SMSVP?

- Creates structure around your SMS
- FAA, stakeholder, and customer recognition that your organization is operating to a high level of safety
- Taking advantage of safety initiatives is just the right thing to do!

### Definition of Terms:

**Safety Management System (SMS)** – means a formal, top-down, organization-wide approach to managing safety risk and assuring the effectiveness of safety risk controls. It includes systematic procedures, practices, and policies for the management of safety risk.

**Safety Policy** – means the certificate holder's documented commitment to safety, which defines its safety objectives and the accountabilities and responsibilities of its employees in regards to safety.

**Safety Risk Management** – means a process within the SMS composed of describing the system, identifying the hazards, and analyzing, assessing and controlling risk.

**Safety Assurance** – means processes within the SMS that function systematically to ensure the performance and effectiveness of safety risk controls and that the organization meets or exceeds its safety objectives through the collection, analysis, and assessment of information.

**Safety Promotion** – means a combination of training and communication of safety information to support the implementation and operation of an SMS in an organization.

This document is a peer reviewed publication by an expert panel of the USHST SMS Working Group. More information about the USHST/IHST, their reports, safety tools, and presentations can be obtained at the web site:

[www.IHST.org](http://www.IHST.org).

Also refer to:

FAA Safety Management Voluntary Program Guide: [http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/sms/specifics\\_by\\_aviation\\_industry\\_type/air\\_operators/](http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/sms/specifics_by_aviation_industry_type/air_operators/)

IHST SMS Toolkit, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition for more SMS reference material (pages 39-46): [http://www.ihst.org/Portals/54/2009\\_SMS\\_Toolkit\\_ed2\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ihst.org/Portals/54/2009_SMS_Toolkit_ed2_Final.pdf)

FAA Advisory Circular, AC 120-92B, SMS for Aviation Service Providers: [http://www.faa.gov/regulations\\_policies/advisory\\_circulars/index.cfm/go/document.information/documentID/1026670](http://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/advisory_circulars/index.cfm/go/document.information/documentID/1026670)