

Deidentified Accident Reporting

BACKGROUND

Aircraft accident investigation requires thorough, objective, and impartial examination of all aspects of the occurrence. ICAO Annex 13, para. 3.1 clearly states that "the sole objective of the investigation shall be the prevention of accidents and incidents. It is not the purpose of this activity to apportion blame or liability".

While research into pilot qualifications and training is often an essential part of an investigation, ICAO Annex 13 cautions in para. 5.12.3 that "the names of the persons involved in the accident or incident shall not be disclosed to the public by the accident investigation authority." The importance of discovering facts is clear, however, it is not necessary to publicly identify the individuals who were directly involved with the occurrence.

Similarly, the European Union states through Regulation EU 996 article 16 that "The report shall protect the anonymity of any individual involved in the accident or serious incident." Pertinent information about the crew or individuals contributing to the event should be included such as: age, validity of licenses and ratings, mandatory checks, flying experience, and relevant information on duty time, medical certification, or physiological conditions. This information offers analysts the ability to identify similar conditions or incidents and contributes to the prevention of future occurrences. Publicly identifying the individuals by name would only serve in the attribution of blame.

While most Accident Investigation Authorities issue reports which are generally in compliance with this principle, there are still many that make personal information available to the public, thereby allowing individuals to be identified. Including personal information in accident occurrence reports does not contribute to the prevention of future occurrences or the amelioration of aviation safety.

The intention is not to absolve the crew of any responsibility as may be decided by a competent authority in any subsequent criminal, civil, administrative, or disciplinary proceedings. The objective of occurrence investigations is to promote safety and prevent accidents, which does not require the public identification of individuals. The

Regulator or judiciary should decide as to the role of the individuals involved and the potential overall detrimental effect on safety such a pursuit and disclosure will impose. This is not a function of the investigators or a concern for promoting safety by any accident investigation authority.

POSITION

IFALPA supports the Standard 5.12.3 of ICAO Annex 13 which states that "the names of the persons involved in the accident or incident shall not be disclosed to the public by the accident investigation authority". The traits or experience (as defined by Annex 13) that contributed to the event are sufficient in identifying safety risks and addressing measures of prevention. Identifying individuals can only lead to the attribution of blame or liability. Often this can be misconstrued, and the overall detrimental effect to safety on future investigations should be considered.

NOTE

For more information, please see IFALPA Briefing Leaflet, 23AAPBL02 – [Detrimental Effects of Identifying Crew Members](#).