

NOAA AVIATION SAFETY BOARD

Terms of Reference

Purpose: The NOAA Aviation Safety Board works in partnership with the NOAA Aviation Safety Program Manager (ASPM) to support the effective implementation of NOAA's Aviation Safety Program and NOAA's Aviation Safety Policy set forth in NOAA Administrative Order (NAO 209-124). The direct involvement of Line and Staff Offices in helping to shape and implement the NOAA Aviation Safety Program is critical to the success of the Program.

Background:

The NOAA Aviation Safety Program, Policy and Board were initiated by action of the NOAA Executive Council (NEC) on June 15, 2005 following a Safety Stand-down effective November 19, 2004 regarding the use of non-NOAA aircraft.

The Board's scope is delineated in the NOAA Aviation Safety Policy (NAO 209-124). Its primary function is to provide safety guidance, training and awareness in the use of Commercial Aviation Services (CAS) in meeting NOAA's airborne data collection requirements. The NAO complies with the Safety Standards Guidelines for Federal Flight Programs codified in sections 102-33.140 and 102-33.155-185 of title 41 of the Code of Federal Regulations (41 CFR 102-33.140 and 41 CFR 102-33.155-185).

The Board exists to support the commitment made in the Aviation Safety Policy that:

“The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has a responsibility to provide a safe working environment for its workforce, and for partners who are exposed to the risks associated with flying on aircraft owned or operated by NOAA.”

The Board promotes both the NOAA safety culture (making safety a priority) and effective NOAA management of the aviation safety program by formulating and recommending aviation safety policy through the ASPM to the Director, Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) by providing guidance to NOAA Line and Staff Offices on aviation safety issues. A close, working relationship will be maintained with the NOAA Safety Council.

Additionally, the ASB may be tasked with the review of operational risk assessments, policies, aircraft operations or incidents.

Membership:

Chairperson: NOAA Aviation Safety Program Manager

Voting Members:

- OMAO/Aircraft Operations Center (AOC)
- NOAA Safety and Environmental Compliance Office
- NMFS
- NOS
- NWS
- OAR
- NESDIS

Non-Voting Observer Representatives:

- NOAA General Counsel
- NOAA Acquisitions and Grants Office
- NOAA Workforce Management Office
- NOAA Program Planning and Integration

Executive Secretary: Aviation Safety Program staff designee

Representatives to the Aviation Safety Board (ASB) will have one Voting Representative responsible for broad collection and dissemination of information within their respective Line or Staff Office.

Each ASB representative may have one or more Technical Representatives responsible for providing technical information regarding Line or Staff Office needs to the Voting Representative.

Aviation Safety Policy NAO 209-124 language regarding Aviation Safety Board Representatives:

NOAA Line Office Assistant Administrators (AAs) or Staff Office equivalents shall:

1. Designate in writing Voting, Non-voting or Non-Voting Observer Representatives [as appropriate] to the ASB;
2. Hold the ASB Representative(s) accountable for ASB duties in their performance appraisals; and
3. Ensure Line or Staff Office compliance with NAO 209-124.

ASB Representative Responsibilities and Projected Workload:

1. Serve as a point of contact for the Line or Staff Office to collect and disseminate information to/from the ASPM as Aviation Safety Policy is implemented throughout the agency.
2. Serve as the Line or Staff Office Representative to the NOAA Aviation Safety Board.
3. Keep the Line Office Deputy Assistant Administrator, Chief Administrative Officer or Staff Office equivalent informed regarding Aviation Safety Policy.

4. Line or Staff Office Representatives will notify their leadership if Labor Unions affected by Aviation Safety Policies request to bargain over changes which impact conditions of employment or over the implementation and impact of these changes.
5. The ASPM communicates to the NOAA Safety Council regarding Board interests and concerns.

Appointment and Recommendation of Voting Board Members:

Selection criteria should be based on each candidate's diversity of experience, currency of experience, and scope of professional qualifications in aviation operations, safety and training. The Aviation Safety Board or NOAA Aviation Safety Program Manager may provide selection recommendations to the Line or Staff Offices. Appointment documentation will be maintained by the ASPM. Appointments will be posted on the Aviation Safety website.

Qualifications of ASB members:

Voting Board Member Aviation Safety Training and Qualification Standards:

The ASB member will report directly to their Line Office/Staff Office AA or Director. Within 12 months of being appointed to the Board, ASB members must meet the following safety training/qualification standards to serve as voting members on the Board:

1. Current certification as a Federal Aviation Safety Officer (ASO) by the Interagency Committee for Aviation Policy (ICAP); AND one of the following:

- A minimum of 5 years of experience serving operationally as a flight crewmember (pilot, co-pilot, flight engineer, navigator, flight director, crew chief, electronics technician, or mechanic);

OR

- A minimum of five years of direct experience as a Field Party Chief, Principle Investigator or similar position of responsibility for conducting aircraft or aviation related operations.

2. Familiarity with the aviation activities their specific Line or Staff Office employees and contractors participate in - to include flights on NOAA aircraft as well as the use of outsourced aircraft.

Term of Voting Members:

No term limit for participation on the ASB applies. Should a Line or Staff Office wish to change its representatives on the Board, the recommendation and appointment procedures cited above apply.

NOAA Aviation Safety Board Roles and Responsibilities with reference to charter activities:

- Approve aviation safety training and Aviation Life Support Equipment (ALSE) requirements;
- Approve minimum aviation safety standards to be included in NOAA's aviation service contracts;
- Approve aviation safety and risk assessment tools developed by the NOAA Aviation Safety Program;
- Solicit and address the aviation safety issues and needs of NOAA;
- Review reports from NOAA aviation accidents and potentially dangerous incidents and recommend preventative measures to the ASPM;
- Review results of NOAA aviation safety audits to monitor compliance with NOAA Aviation Safety Policy;
- Serve as a policy and implementation advisor to the ASPM;
- Evaluate data and trends gathered from operational, inspection, and incident reporting statistics, and suggest corrective actions to the ASPM;
- Address aviation related matters as requested by NOAA management and by interested programs and Line or Staff Offices; and
- Respond to questions and concerns brought forward by the aviation user's community at large.

NOAA Aviation Safety Board Authority:

The Director, OMAO, under NAO 209-124, Section 5, has the authority and responsibility to broadly administer NOAA's Aviation Safety Policy through the ASPM. The ASB serves to support the Director, OMAO on aviation safety related matters within the ASB's scope of responsibilities, as delineated in NAO 209-124, Section 5. Specific subject matter experts may be called for consultation and opinion at the Board's discretion for any particular policy matter including, but not limited to:

- Operational procedures and policy,
- Operator training and certification,

- Inspections,
- ALSE,
- Aircraft outfitting and systems configuration.

Board Members are responsible for communicating aviation safety requirements down to the lowest levels of their respective Line or Staff Offices and for facilitating collection of feedback for Board discussion.

Decision Making Process:

All voting members (or their proxies) are expected to vote when decisions are being made. To facilitate this, meeting announcements will be distributed to all Voting Board Members at least 4 days prior to any meeting at which a decision will be made, and the announcement will clearly state that there will be a decision point. A vote may be cast before the meeting by a Voting Board Member who cannot attend. Virtual meetings and votes are permitted at the discretion of the Chair.

Every Voting Board Member will cast a vote on all decisions. Major objections to the majority vote should be made part of the record. Any Voting Board Member of the Panel may request that an item be raised to the Director, OMAO.

The Chair will strive for consensus on every issue but if a decision cannot be reached by consensus, then Voting Board Members will use majority voting to reach a final decision. Any ties resulting from majority voting will be broken by the Chair. A virtual vote, vote ahead of time, or subsequent vote (if absent) is permitted. When time is of the essence, the matter shall be referred directly to the Chairperson for resolution and decision coordination with the Director.

Meetings:

Meeting agendas will be distributed to the Voting Board Members and to interested parties on request. The ASB meetings will have official minutes and actions recorded. Meeting records will be maintained on the Aviation Safety Program website and distributed via e-mail to ASB members.

Virtual Meetings:

To ensure flexibility and timely response to matters where time is of the essence, or when in-person meetings are not warranted or feasible, the Chairperson may call a virtual meeting of the ASB. The Chairperson may use individual phone calls, conference phone calls, or email to distribute matters before the Board and collect the opinions of Board Members on such matters. Notice, agenda and records will be maintained in the same way as meetings in person.