SAFECOM Working Group
Progress Report

This is a list of improvements and suggestions for the SAFECOM program and website that came from system users concerned with finding ways to make aviation hazard reporting more effective at preventing future mishaps.

Since SWG Founded in 2008

| AWARDS & RECOGNITION | SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS | PROMOTION | TRAINING | PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS |

Action Items	In Progress	Resolved
AWARDS & RECOGNITION		
Suggestion: Increase recognition for those that self-report or make a significant contribution to aviation hazard reporting through the use of SAFECOM. **Action Accomplished:** In 2008 the SWG introduced the SAFECOM Water Bottle program as a way to reward significant reporters and to provide a visual cue to others that hazard reporting is appreciated and valued. Since its inception many worthy recipients have received recognition for their conscientious attempts at improving aviation safety even when their own reputations were at stake.	☐	☒
SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS		
Suggestion: Be able to reset forgotten passwords via SAFECOM website. **Action Accomplished:** In 2008 the ability to reset a SAFECOM manager's forgotten password from the logon page of the SAFECOM website was added. Assistance from the SAFECOM administrators was retained for instances when manual resets were still necessary but thanks to the increased flexibility, improved personal security, and faster turnaround time that come with automation the on-line password reset option has been an unqualified success.	☐	☒
Suggestion: Provide a way for SAFECOM users to submit comments and suggestions about the program **Action Accomplished:** In February of 2011 the SWG added a comments form to the SAFECOM website encouraging participants to submit both suggestions for improvement and comments about folks worthy of special recognition for their efforts at promoting the system. Feedback is welcomed by the SWG so that we can continually improve this worthy program.	☐	☒

Suggestion: Remove identifying information to make SAFECOM submissions more anonymous. **Action Resolved:** The SWG appreciates the occasional need for anonymity when reporting aviation hazards. The on-line system was originally designed to give the submitter flexibility in deciding what information to provide including making the name and contact information optional. The only data currently required on any SAFECOM submission is the name of the agency with operational control over the mission, the state the event took place in, and the date of the event. This minimal amount of information is necessary for both logistical reasons (i.e. routing the SAFECOM report to the appropriate managers) and to give managers information they need to perform follow-up for accident prevention purposes.	☐	☒
Suggestion: Provide a means for adding photos and other documents to a SAFECOM report. **Action Accomplished:** In August of 2009 the ability to attach up to four image files (jpg, gif, and pdf) per SAFECOM report was added to the on-line system. Since going on-line the new system enhancement has been widely used with some images even finding their way into accident prevention publications.	☐	☒
Suggestion: Restructure mission codes to increase ease of use. **Action Resolved:** The SWG discussed alternate classification systems for mission codes but ultimately decided that none of the proposed systems were significantly easier to navigate than the existing one. Issues concerning the maintenance of historical integrity and cost were also factors.	☐	☒
Suggestion: Reformat the SAFECOM search summary for custom reports. **Action Resolved:** The SWG determined that there was inadequate demand to justify the costs of modifying the actual on-line system. However, services via the system administrators would allow the few users requesting these customized reports access to the data for their occasional use.	☐	☒
Suggestion: Make the on-line system more user friendly. **Action Accomplished:** The search page was re-designed to expand the multi-select fields and to include additional search options that can filter searches to include or exclude duplicate SAFECOM reports, also the number of results shown per page in the search summary can be customized to suit the individual user's needs. Lastly, additional functionality was added to the SAFECOM submission form to give users the ability to attach image files to their reports.	☐	☒

Actions in Progress: The SWG is discussing related suggestions to enhancing the usability of the on-line system. One idea is to explore the feasibility and cost effectiveness of creating a separate fillable form that can be emailed or faxed to the SAFECOM system for immediate upload. Another idea is to find ways to process reports in a timely manner so that necessary follow-up can be performed while the issue is still most relevant. Also needed is better documentation on SAFECOM reports that have intentionally been suppressed due to misuse of the system, testing, or to protect sensitive information not appropriate for public consumption. Other valuable suggestions identified in the 2010 SAFECOM Survey include adding the aviation resource manager name field to the SAFECOM report and providing links to other risk management, agency, and GACC websites. **Actions Accomplished:** An aircraft manager name field was added to the SAFECOM form and links to related web sites was added to a links page on the SAFECOM website. Also, it has been recognized that the Forest Service has a mature and successful system of timely processing of nearly all of their SAFECOM reports. Due to a different organizational structure AMD has developed their own tool to measure each of the DOI's Bureau performance in SAFECOM completion rates hoping to spur competition among the bureaus and encourage timely completion of submitted SAFECOM reports. That tool has been shared with the National Aviation Managers of the various DOI Bureaus.	☒	☐
Suggestion: Create a version of the SAFECOM system that can run as a mobile application on devices such as PDAs and BlackBerrys. **Action In Progress:** The SWG decided that a good approach to developing this suggestion is to put it back out to the aviation community for feedback on the desire for this product and to see if there was a volunteer for developing the actual application.	☒	☐
PROMOTION		
Suggestion: Indentify perceptions about SAFECOM from aviation managers and field users in order to discover ways to improve and promote the system. **Action Accomplished:** In 2010 the first ever SAFECOM Survey was launched. The survey was distributed widely among both Forest Service and DOI personnel and vendors with an open-ended design for gathering the widest range of opinions possible. The wealth of information gathered from the survey has aided the SWG in identifying weaknesses and strengths of the program and also supplying many helpful ideas on ways to improve it.	☐	☒
Suggestion: Distribute information about use of the SAFECOM system.	☐	☒

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Action Accomplished: In July of 2006 Safety Alert 06-01 was published with information promoting the use of SAFECOM and busting some myths about why not to report. Continuous promotion of SAFECOM is an important part of accident prevention and so in July of 2008 Safety Alert 08-07 was issued to further clarify issues of misuse and to encourage more constructive reporting of aviation hazards.		
Suggestion: Get vendors involved in the SAFECOM system to help increase trust and use. **Action in Progress:** Ideas considered by the SWG to increase vendor involvement with the SAFECOM system have included: Adding vendors to the system automated notification process; inviting a vendor representative to participate in the SWG; review vendor suggestions. Concerns about Privacy Act compliance have stymied efforts to allow vendors access to the protected side of the SAFECOM system but attempts to find other solutions are still being considered. Some actions already taken include adding the President of HAI and vendor contacts to mass emails concerning the SAFECOM program.	☒	☐
Suggestion: Increase promotion of the SAFECOM system as identified in the 2010 SAFECOM Survey. **Action in Progress:** The SWG is tasked with promotion of the SAFECOM system as one of its core responsibilities. Based on survey results and suggestions renewed efforts are being made to inform aviation users of the benefits of the SAFECOM program. Primarily through the use of promotional brochures, SAFECOM Summaries with trend analysis, best practices, and lessons learned distributed to managers and the field. Special attention is also being given to the vendor community to encourage their involvement from the grass roots level on up by utilizing opportunities to work together. Promotion is the primary purpose of this group and this task will always be an on-going concern.	☐	☒
TRAINING		
Suggestions: Provide more in-depth training on the SAFECOM system than is currently available through IAT. **Action in Progress:** A Power Point presentation has been drafted and is currently in the process of being vetted along with a lesson plan. Once completed the module will be placed on the SAFECOM web page and distributed to safety managers in both the Forest Service and the bureaus within DOI. An attempt will also be made to make the new presentation a part of the IAT learning curriculum.	☒	☐

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Suggestion / Action		
Suggestion: Provide better instructions about roles and responsibilities of SAFECOM managers. **Action Accomplished:** In June of 2009 the SWG updated the existing SAFECOM Manager Instructions to include more examples and provide clearer language as to manager roles and responsibilities. In addition, a New SAFECOM User Orientation Power Point presentation was developed in 2010 to explain more of the technical aspects of using the system.	☐	☒
Suggestion: Based on results from the 2010 SAFECOM Survey a need was identified to provide more training materials to aviation users and managers about the proper use of the SAFECOM system. **Action in Progress:** In addition to the IAT A-106 module update and the development of the SAFECOM program Power Point presentation to be made available on the SAFECOM web site, the SWG has begun work on creating a brochure that can be in both hard copy and electronic format so that it can be distributed to agency employees and vendors at meetings, training, workshops, vendor pre-work contract meetings and briefings. All new training products would emphasize the non-punitive nature of the system, proper use, prohibition on use as a contract evaluation tool, option to file anonymously, ways to report misuse, various methods of reporting available, and clear definitions of what hazards and maintenance items to report.	☒	☐
PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS		
Suggestion: Remove conflicting information from IHOG about SAFECOM reporting and the Daily Diary. **Action in Progress:** A draft of the new proposed language has been submitted to the IHOPs group for approval. The SWG is still waiting to hear on the IHOPs decision.	☒	☐
Suggestion: Standardize language about the SAFECOM system throughout official publications and policy documents. **Action in Progress:** The SWG has proposed standard language to be used in the IHOG Appendix C, IRPG, Redbook, SAFECOM website, Forest Service Airtanker Contract, Forest Service SMS Guide, Department of the Interior Departmental Manual, and DOI Bureau National Aviation Plans as well as other documents that reference the SAFECOM system. The proposed language is currently under consideration by Forest Service and Aviation Management. Once agreed upon the language will need to be adopted by approving authorities for each of the affected publications and documents.	☒	☐
Suggestion: Provide more contact information for system users. **Action Accomplished:** By June of 2009 a contact information page was	☐	☒

added to the SAFECOM website that lists the names and contact numbers/email addresses of national and regional managers listed by agency. To find that list visit the SAFECOM home page (https://www.safecom.gov) and click on the "SAFECOM Contacts List" link on the left side.		
Suggestions: Provide more protection of private information. **Action Accomplished:** In August of 2010 a requirement for new users gaining access to the protected side of the SAFECOM system was established. New users are now required to acknowledge in writing a confidentiality statement to protect any personal identifiable information included on pre-sanitized SAFECOM reports. New users are also required to familiarize themselves with the SAFECOM Manager Instructions and the New SAFECOM User Orientation slides. The written acknowledgements are kept on file by the SAFECOM administrators.	☐	☒
Suggestion: Create guidance for new subscribers outside of the DOI and FS aviation community. **Action in Progress:** Issues have arisen concerning the inclusion of non-DOI or Forest Service members into the SAFECOM community. The SWG has begun discussions to identify areas of concern. Once a thorough understanding of the issues has been achieved recommended guidance to the Forest Service and AMD will be developed by the SWG.	☒	☐
Suggestion: Clarify what maintenance actions ought to be reported in SAFECOM. **Action in Progress:** The SWG has created a sub-committee to address the topic of maintenance reporting. Feedback has been solicited from maintenance personnel in both AMD and the Forest Service. Once completed, guidance will be provided to national and regional managers for dissemination to the field. In addition, an effort will be made to update all policy documents and contracts to be consistent with the new guidelines. Also, being explored is the possibility of modifying the on-line SAFECOM system to allow better filtering between maintenance hazards and all others to make system searches more meaningful to the individual user.	☒	☐
Suggestion: The 2010 SAFECOM Survey identified the strong need to provide better assurance that the SAFECOM system not be used punitively. **Action in Progress:** The SWG has long endeavored to ensure that all users of the system be made aware that SAFECOMs may not be used in a punitive manner in the area of personnel decisions and contract awards. The results of the 2010 SAFECOM Survey demonstrate that more is needed to assure the aviation community that hazard reporting does not	☒	☐

lead to punishment. In addition to clarifying the official language in policy, guides, and handbooks to state the non-punitive use of SAFECOMs, accountability and methods for reporting misuse of the SAFECOM system are also being developed.		
Suggestion: Increase accountability for SAFECOM system managers by providing a means to report and review suspected misuse. **Action in Progress:** The SWG has discussed the possibility of creating a Peer Panel process that would allow members from multiple organizations and job roles to participate in a neutral body designed to mediate issues identified through the SAFECOM system. The project is still in its formative stage. Another idea explored was the creation of an anonymous reporting hotline that would be monitored by a non-agency answering service who would relay vital data to the SWG for action. The SWG considered the feasibility of this idea and research into a past attempt to do something similar revealed that the service was underutilized and did not present an effective process for achieving the desired goals.	☒	☐
Action Accomplished: The creation of an anonymous comments/suggestion form that can be accessed through the SAFECOM website. The comments would be emailed directly to the SAFECOM administrators who would then present the information to the remainder of the SWG.	☐	☒