

DAY FIVE Toolbox Talk

The Importance of Stakeholder Collaboration for Safety Outcomes

There is possibly no greater example teamwork than what occurs daily in the aviation industry.

The cross section of people who contribute to this team represent diversity at every angle you could imagine; blue collar, white collar, those motivated by the desire to ensure great customer service, or to ensure security outcomes, or to ensure the aircraft is clean or serviceable or fuelled.

There are the people that the customer sees but just as importantly those who the customer never sees such as those who look after our tarmacs, our lighting, our infrastructure, and our airspace. Most work on the ground and are therefore location fixed however many are mobile and only join a local airport team for the time it takes to do a turnaround.

But you then have to remember that this incredible team come together to put customers way up in the sky at more than half the speed of sound where they watch movies, eat and even sleep. But what is truly amazing is that this occurs with incredible predictability but even more extraordinary levels of safety. It is no wonder for us in the industry that we find it so intoxicating and addictive.

Airport Safety Week is a great opportunity to think big and to reflect on how we can proactively create an inclusive culture to ensure all the players on the team understand the role they play, and they have a voice to help drive us to even higher standards.

Promoting a just and inclusive Safety Culture

Effective teamwork is critical in high-risk industries such as aviation. Successful teamwork occurs when every member of a team—on the ground and in the air—performs and contributes in the best way possible to achieve a common goal.

Individual performances are not the primary focus—it is the collective performance of the team which matters the most. An effective team manager recognises that individuals have different strengths and limitations, but ensures, through communication, programs and culture, that the individuals work together in a coordinated manner to achieve team goals. Teamwork can have a major impact on successful operational risk and safety management.

A safety culture is a broad, organisation-wide approach to safety management. A safety culture is the result of combined individual and group efforts toward values, attitudes, goals and proficiency of an organisation's health and safety program.

'Just culture' is a term that refers to a culture that is both fair to staff who make errors and effective in reducing safety risks. In a 'just culture', all staff know that safety is valued in the organisation, and they continually look for risks that pose a threat to safety.

In creating a Just Safety Culture, all levels of management are highly regarded on how they act toward workers and on a day-to-day basis. Upper management commitment to workplace safety helps workers take it more seriously and translates into a safer work environment for everyone. Responsibility for encouraging the safety culture may start with management, but it trickles down to everyone in the company. Everyone has a part in keeping themselves and others safe.

Under Just Culture conditions, individuals are not blamed for honest errors, but are held accountable for willful violations and gross negligence.

People are less willing to inform the organisation about their own errors and other safety problems or hazards if they are afraid of being punished or prosecuted. Such lack of trust of employees prevents the management from being properly informed of the actual risks.

Managers are then unable to make the right decisions in order to improve safety. However, a totally no-blame culture is neither feasible nor desirable. Most people desire some level of accountability when a mishap occurs.

Just Culture is as an atmosphere of trust in which people are encouraged, and even rewarded, for providing essential safety-related information, but in which they are also clear about where the line must be drawn between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Hence, a Just Culture supports learning from unsafe acts in order to improve the level of safety awareness through the improved recognition of safety situations and helps to develop conscious articulation and sharing of safety information. Consequently, a Just Culture can be regarded as an enabler, and even indicator of, (a good) Safety Culture.

The overriding objective for each aerodrome is to operate to the effect the efficient movement of passengers and freight while preserving safety of personnel, assets, the environment and each organisation's reputation. Maintaining airside safety is a key component of this, requiring several organisations to work cohesively to a common objective.

A positive safety culture can result in improved workplace health and safety (WHS) and Organisational performance but a safety culture doesn't just develop – it takes effort and needs to be modelled from the top.

Strong leadership and management commitment are directly related to safety performance as it demonstrates by example to employees what actions will be rewarded, and in turn, what actions and behaviour will not be tolerated. A positive safety culture needs to be embraced and practiced by the CEO, senior managers all the way through to operational staff. A strong safety culture will become second nature to staff and seen as 'the way we do things around here'.

Mental Health in the Workplace – Looking out for you and your mates!

Work-related mental health conditions (also known as psychological injuries) have become a major concern in Australian workplaces due to the negative impact on individual employees, and the costs associated with the long periods away from work that are typical of these claims. Each year:

- 7,200 Australians are compensated for work-related mental health conditions, equating to around six per cent of workers' compensation claims, and
- approximately \$543 million is paid in workers' compensation for work-related mental health conditions.

Mental health can be adversely affected by exposure to a range of hazards or factors in the workplace, including, for example:

- high job demand
- low job demand
- poor support
- poor workplace relationships
- low role clarity
- poor organisational change management
- poor organisational justice
- remote or isolated work, and
- violent or traumatic events.

Exposure to these hazards can lead to work-related stress. When stress is very high and or prolonged it can in turn lead to work-related psychological or physical injury. For example, work-related stress may lead to depression and anxiety in the long term.

Work-related stress has been linked with high levels of:

- unplanned absences including sick leave
- staff turnover
- withdrawal and presenteeism, and
- poor work and poor product quality.

Workers have a duty to take reasonable care of their health and safety and not adversely affect others' health and safety. They must comply, so far as they are reasonably able, with reasonable instructions on health and safety matters, and cooperate with reasonable WHS policies or procedures that they have been notified of. For example, this might include working to job descriptions to avoid role conflict or cooperating with workplace policies to prevent bullying.

Understanding safety culture	https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/82705/understanding-safety-culture.pdf
Promotion of safety culture at airports	http://www.aci-asiapac.aero/services/main/19/upload/service/19/self/YE201603_BLR.pdf
Five Characteristics of an Effective Aviation Safety Culture	http://aviationsafetyblog.asms-pro.com/blog/characteristics-effective-aviation-safety-culture
Just Culture	https://www.skybrary.aero/index.php/Just_Culture
Human Factors and Safety Behaviours	https://www.casa.gov.au/operations-safety-and-travel/safety-advice/human-factors/human-factors-and-safety-behaviours
Safety Management Systems	https://www.casa.gov.au/operations-safety-and-travel/safety-management-systems
Making excellence possible: the role of safety culture	https://www.flightsafetyaustralia.com/2020/07/making-excellence-possible-the-role-of-safety-culture/