

**All NATMAC Representatives**

31 October 2008

**NATMAC INFORMATIVE LETTER**

Dear Colleagues,

**ICAO UNIVERSAL SAFETY OVERSIGHT AUDIT PROGRAMME (USOAP)  
PLANNED AUDIT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, FEBRUARY 2009**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This communication is issued to inform industry that the UK is due to be audited by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) under the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) comprehensive systems approach during the latter part of 2008 and early 2009. The on-site part of the audit will take place from 3 to 20 February 2009 and will cover the UK itself (UK Main), the UK's Overseas Territories and its Crown Dependencies. The Civil Aviation Authority has been tasked by the Department for Transport with the coordination of the audit arrangements and a UK National Safety Oversight Coordinator (NSOC) has been appointed within the CAA.
- 1.2 As part of the on-site audit, the ICAO auditors will wish to visit a representative sample of the UK aviation industry. It must be emphasised that the ICAO USOAP audit is an audit of the State and the State's aviation safety oversight entities; it does not audit the aviation industry. Accordingly, the entities to be formally audited as part of the UK Main Audit will be the Department for Transport (to include the Air Accident Investigation Branch and Search & Rescue functions) and the Civil Aviation Authority. However, the ICAO Audit Team will conduct visits to selected organisations within the aviation industry to verify the implementation of the State's oversight processes and procedures.
- 1.3 We expect ICAO to notify the NSOC in advance which organisations the audit team would wish to visit and we will endeavour to provide those who are selected with as much advance warning as possible. The NSOC plans to organise a seminar/workshop in January next year to acquaint those organisations selected with the USOAP process, to explain the role of industry in that process and to answer any questions industry may have. Your cooperation in this matter will be much appreciated.

**2. Background to the ICAO USOAP**

- 2.1 The Convention on International Civil Aviation signed at Chicago on 7 December 1944 ("the Chicago Convention") established certain global principles and rules in order that international civil aviation should develop in a safe and orderly manner. The Chicago Convention gives signatories, or Contracting States as they are called, certain rights in exchange for meeting certain obligations and established the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

2.2 Many of these rights, in particular the right to mutual recognition of licences, certificates, etc., are dependent upon States following the rules established by ICAO in the 18 Annexes to the Convention. For many years it was taken on trust that States were following these rules but a series of high profile accidents by foreign aircraft in the USA in the early '90s called into question this trust. Following unilateral action by the USA to assess other States' compliance with ICAO rules before allowing their aircraft to enter the United States, pressure was exerted on ICAO to establish a permanent, mandatory audit programme to determine whether its Contracting States were indeed following its rules. The ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) was therefore launched on 1 January 1999 and superseded a voluntary safety oversight assessment programme established in 1995.

2.3 The scope of the Programme, initially limited to Annex 1 — Personnel Licensing, Annex 6 — Operation of Aircraft and Annex 8 — Airworthiness of Aircraft, has now evolved into the "Comprehensive Systems Approach" whose scope covers 16 of the 18 Annexes. The objective of USOAP is to promote global aviation safety through auditing Contracting States, on a regular basis, to determine States' capability for safety oversight by assessing the effective implementation of the critical elements of a safety oversight system and the status of States' implementation of safety-relevant ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), associated procedures, guidance material and safety related practices. The eight critical elements are as follows:

1. primary aviation legislation
2. specific operating regulations
3. State civil aviation system and safety oversight functions
4. technical personnel qualification and training
5. technical guidance and tools
6. licensing, certification, authorisation and approval obligations
7. surveillance obligations and
8. the resolution of safety concerns.

2.4 Any queries concerning the audit should be directed to:

Lou Braham  
Head of Business Management  
Directorate of Airspace Policy  
CAA House  
45-59 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6TE

[lou.braham@caa.co.uk](mailto:lou.braham@caa.co.uk)

Yours sincerely,



J C Walker  
NATMAC Secretary