

**NATIONAL AIRLINES COUNCIL OF CANADA
CONSEIL NATIONAL DES LIGNES AÉRIENNES DU CANADA**



**NACC Presentation on Aviation Safety and SMS
to the House of Commons Committee on Transport,
Infrastructure and Communities**

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The National Airlines Council of Canada Presentation on Aviation Safety and SMS

- Thank you Honorable Members of the Committee for the opportunity to appear today to talk to you about aviation safety and Safety Management Systems.
- I am Captain Jacques Mignault and I am here with my colleagues Captain Michel Chiasson and Mr. Bernie Adamache on behalf of the National Airlines Council of Canada (NACC) which is an industry association comprised of Canada's 4 largest passenger airlines – Air Canada, WestJet, Air Transat and Jazz Air LP.
- Together, the member carriers of the NACC directly employ 43,000 Canadians and directly serve 59 Canadian communities.
- We operate an average of 1,800 flights a day – or 657,000 flights annually.
- And we carry 130,000 passengers a day or 46 million annually on a collective fleet of 437 large transport category aircraft.
- Most importantly, we conduct this massive undertaking with a very deliberate and unwavering commitment to safety, which is ingrained in everything we do. Nothing is more important to us than delivering our passengers safely to their destination.
- The NACC advocates for safe, sustainable and competitive air travel by engaging with government and industry stakeholders to promote the development of policies, regulations and legislation that foster the world-class transportation system essential to our country's prosperity.
- The NACC's operating committees, of which all three of us are active members, are staffed by volunteer representatives of the four member airlines.
- I serve as Vice-Chair of the NACC's Safety Subcommittee whose objective is to maintain and enhance world-class safety standards at NACC member airlines and to collaborate on safety-related airline issues.
- I am a Captain with Air Transat and in my day job, I am the Director of Flight Safety and Operational Security. As such, I am responsible for the day to day management of the airline's Safety Management System.
- Prior to joining Air Transat in 1998, I served with the Canadian Forces for 24 years as a military officer and pilot. While in the military, I accumulated flying experience in training and transport type aircraft, in addition to assuming a command position as Commanding Officer of a tactical transport squadron.

- NACC carriers have collectively embraced the principles of Safety Management Systems and embarked on a journey which brought about a fundamental change in the industry's culture towards safety.
- Today, I can state unequivocally that such a transformation has taken place at all levels within our member airlines – employees, managers, and the highest echelons of the corporation up to the CEO level are engaged. This would certainly not have been possible without the firm commitment and accountability required under the SMS framework.
- The development of a safety-focused corporate culture is one of the cornerstones of SMS. This culture makes each employee accountable for playing a role in promoting safe operations through his quality work and in contributing to report risk or undesirable situations.
- Among the company's senior executives, it increases awareness of the risks inherent to aircraft operations and of the obligation to mitigate them.
- There can be no doubt that the Canadian aviation industry as a whole has enjoyed an excellent reputation for looking inside itself in an effort to develop better aircraft designs and better operating practices, all with the goal to significantly reduce the risk of accidents.
- To the best of our knowledge, there is no other industry, with the exception perhaps of the nuclear industry, which has, as a result of each and every report filing, demonstrated such a high degree of internal investigation leading to the implementation of corrective measures.
- Over the years, these investigations looked beyond normal design and operating practices and started to focus on human factors. Training in the areas of Crew Resource Management and maintenance was introduced to achieve the desired safety improvement goals.
- In this respect, we do not see SMS as something really new, but rather as the necessary evolution of a safety process being extended throughout the entire airline organization. Because of this, we at the NACC fully support Transport Canada in its implementation of SMS.
- Global aviation accident statistics of the past 5 years indicate that the downward trend in the accident rate we had observed for a significant period has somewhat flattened. Safety Management Systems are seen as having the potential of presenting a breakthrough in allowing a further reduction of the annual accident rate by virtue of its key elements:
 - a. A clear notion of accountability which guarantees a personal commitment towards Safety from the airline's Chief Executive Officer.
 - b. A non-punitive reporting system where employees are encouraged to share experiences or concerns about perceived unsafe practices for the betterment of the organization and improved safety.

- c. An incident investigation function whose focus is clearly on systemic causal factors rather than aiming exclusively at employees' mistakes.
 - d. An emphasis on proactive activities such as the systematic monitoring of flight data and the examination of industry wide safety events for the purpose of determining the airline's risk exposure to similar events.
 - e. Every operational department within the airline taking ownership of its safety record and setting specific safety targets annually as part of the airline's strategic planning exercise.
- In the current debate over the introduction of Safety Management Systems, it must be made clear that no one within the aviation industry is advocating that the oversight and continued surveillance functions have become redundant.
 - On the contrary, we believe that certification and oversight surveillance activities rightly fall within Transport Canada's mandate, while the airlines are best positioned to manage safety effectively. Like any new system, it can be improved. We are of course ready to work with Transport Canada, this Committee, and other stakeholders to improve SMS.
 - I would now like to give an opportunity to my colleagues from the other NACC member carriers to briefly introduce themselves. As you will see, we have brought with us today representatives of three of the NACC's operating committees that are best placed to discuss issues dealing with SMS implementation at Canada's four major airlines.
 - My name is Bernie Adamache and I am representing the NACC's Maintenance and Engineering Subcommittee, which as our name suggests, focuses on all regulations that apply to Canadian aviation maintenance and engineering activities.
 - I am presently responsible for one of the heavy maintenance bases at Air Canada Jazz. After graduating from trade school in 1978 I held positions in the maintenance departments at Bearskin Airlines and Pratt & Whitney Canada's Flight Test Division. For the next seven years I was employed by Transport Canada in various roles. In 1995 I joined Air Canada where I held various positions that include being the Senior Director of System Line Maintenance as well as the Director of Regulatory Compliance for the maintenance division.
 - I am Captain Michel Chiasson. I serve as Chair of the NACC's Flight Operations Subcommittee which works with the government and industry stakeholders to promote effective regulations and practices with respect to airline operations. We meet regularly with Transport Canada, NAV CANADA and the FAA, as well as with industry partners, with the ultimate goal in mind to improve and better serve our common constituents, the travelling public.
 - A Commercial pilot since 1974, I started with Nordair and through a series of mergers I have been with Air Canada since 1979 with whom I continue to fly as a Captain while holding numerous senior Flight Operations management positions. In the last 10 years through 3 secondments with Air Canada, I have been Vice-President with a foreign operator, Director

of Flight Operations with ZIP and Vice President of Flight Operations for Jazz as the designated certificate holder under the Canadian Aviation Regulations. In addition to serving as Chair of the NACC's Flight Operations Subcommittee, I also serve as Air Canada's representative at IATA's Flight Operations Group.

- In closing, I would like to reiterate the NACC's firm commitment to SMS because we know that aviation safety can only be enhanced through ongoing vigilance. We recognize that as with any new initiative, the implementation of SMS will pose some challenges, which is why we will continue to work with Transport Canada, this Committee and our industry partners to overcome these challenges, improve SMS and ensure continued excellence in aviation safety in Canada.
- Thank you.