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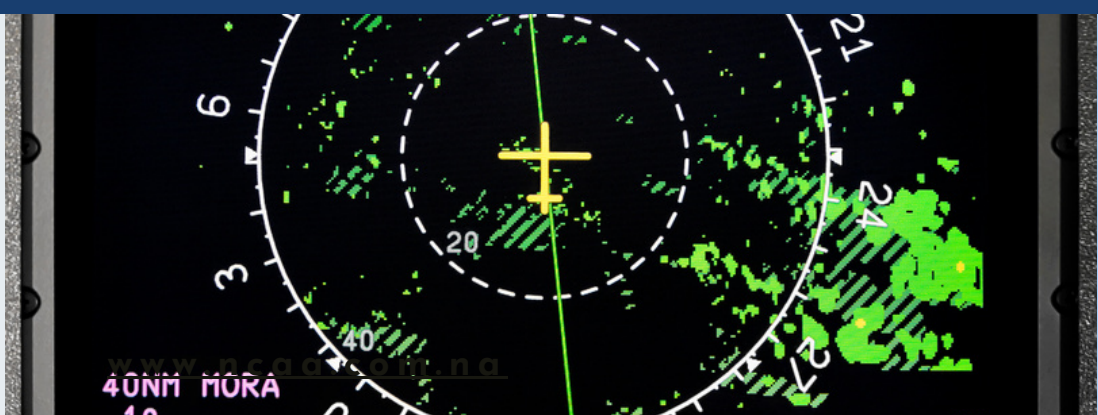
JULY
2026



Safety MATTERS

Providing the Namibian aviation industry and users with vital information on the latest aviation safety statistics and reports for the continuous improvement of safety systems:

Share Knowledge = Improve Safety





This monthly publication keeps industry, NCAA licence holders, and the general public informed of safety-related occurrences, recommendations, and initiatives within the industry. All reports are de-identified and no attempt should be made to identify the reporter in this or any other avenue unless specific authorisation is given.

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Safety data trending is essential in aviation safety. Only with adequate data on proactive and reactive mechanisms, can we move towards prediction. By analysing key events and processes through appropriate metrics, we can move closer to achieving maximum safety levels and minimising undesirable events.

Safety Statistics

July 2026

There were 48 occurrence reports in July, slightly down from June but still an improvement over 43 for the same period in 2025. The reports included:

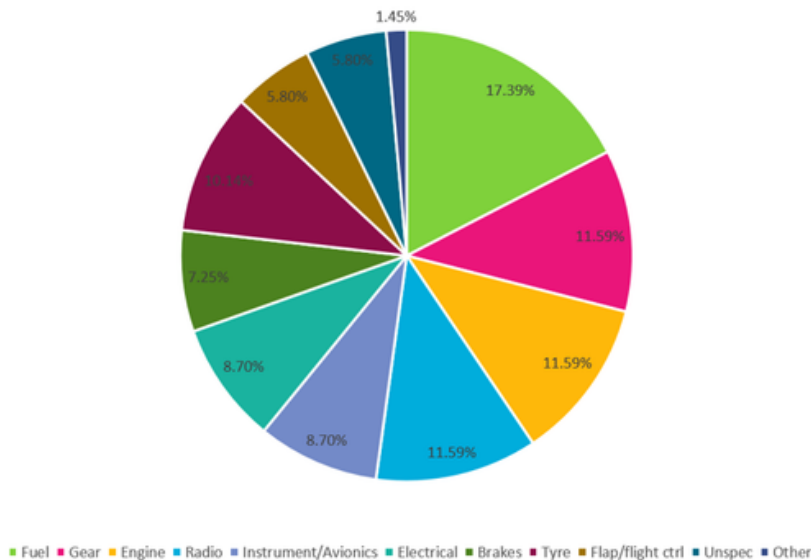
- 27 mandatory events, however, the remaining voluntary reports included a significant seven hazard reports.
- There were again 17 medium-risk events, including 6 bird strikes, and one high-risk event – a non-compliance issue.
- No accidents were recorded in July.



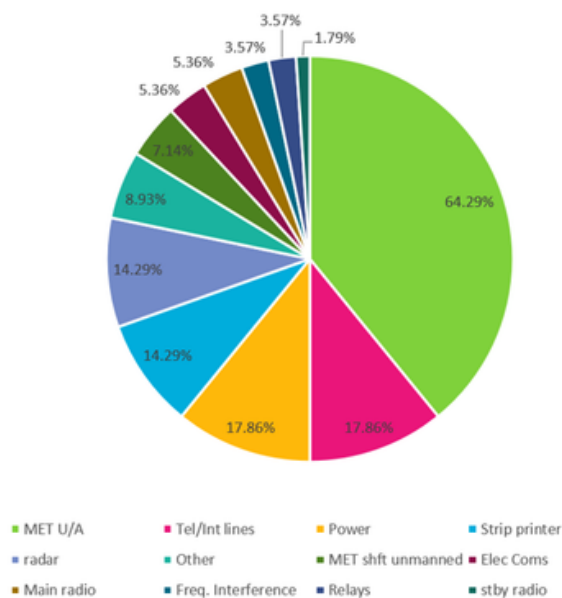
Detailed information is available in the occurrence section, and trends will be reviewed by the State Safety Programme Steering Committee (SSP Steercom) and the SSP Technical Working Group (TWG)

For more information about classifications of risk, see the definitions in Safety Bulletin 1-22. Graphs included in this document show 12-month rolling figures unless specified.

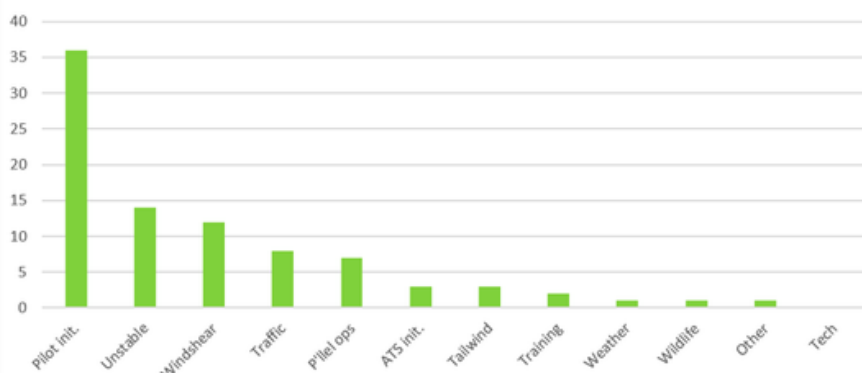
Technical Events



ANSP Events



Go Arounds



The SDCPS monitors a large range of parameters to determine trends and drive action. The graphs opposite track trending over approximately 12 months, indicating types of events in the various larger categories that we normally report on. It is essentially a detailed summary of the tables you review each month in the occurrence section.

As we have already reported, nearly two thirds of our reports come from ATS, so this subset was larger subset. It is noted that A-MET failures were an unsurprising large component of these matters. NMS has recently appointed a quality specialist to address shortcomings, particularly ISO 9001 certification.

Not immediately evident without analysis, fuel system faults were the largest technical sector report. Engine faults were also a large segment of technical events. Noting that the category includes indication faults along with partial failures and full failures.

Of note, windshear and non-parallel operations feature high in reasons for go-arounds, as does traffic. These areas, which may have potential mitigations, are being investigated.

Statistics

Safety Performance Indicators July 2026

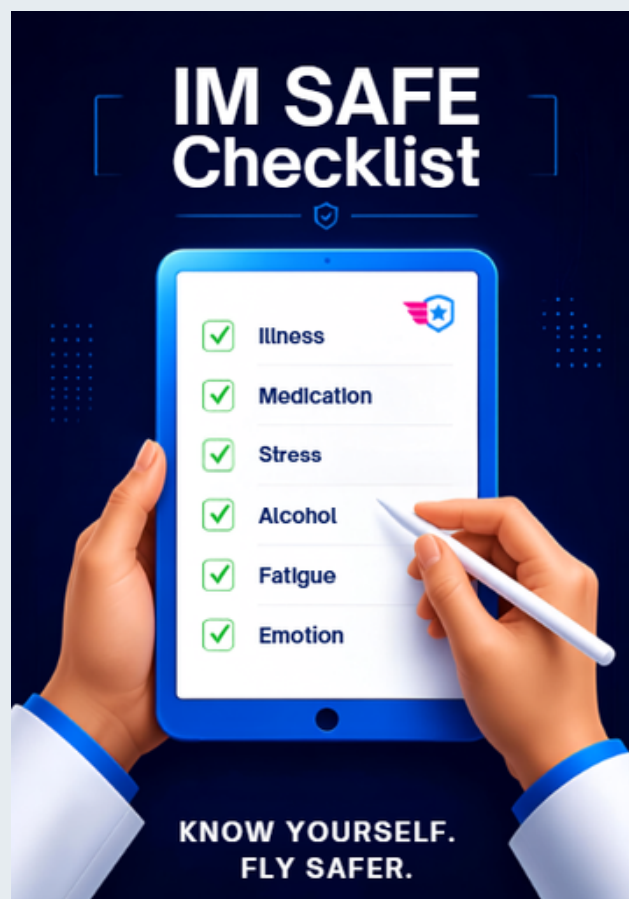
	AirProx/LOS	CFIT	Rwy Excurs.	Wildlife	LOCI	Rwy Incurs.	Maint & Tech
12 mth avg	0.565	0.058	0.079	2.314	0.076	0.229	2.654
JAN '26	0.517	0.000	0.000	4.396	0.000	0.000	1.810
FEB '26	0.272	0.000	0.000	3.541	0.272	0.272	3.814
MAR '26	0.487	0.000	0.000	5.602	0.000	0.000	5.845
APR '26	0.227	0.227	0.227	2.043	0.000	0.454	2.043
MAY '26	1.036	0.000	0.000	2.073	0.207	0.207	2.073
JUN '26	1.485	0.247	0.247	1.980	0.000	0.495	4.207
JUL '26	0.478	0.000	0.000	1.196	0.000	0.239	3.109
AUG '24	0.436	0.218	0.000	1.307	0.000	0.218	1.960
SEP '25	0.223	0.000	0.223	0.893	0.223	0.223	1.117
OCT '25	0.430	0.000	0.000	0.645	0.215	0.430	1.934
NOV '25	0.427	0.000	0.000	1.067	0.000	0.213	1.921
DEC '25	0.756	0.000	0.252	3.023	0.000	0.000	2.015
Target 2026	0.327	0.111	0.100	1.308	0.129	0.120	1.842
Avg 2025	0.363	0.062	0.082	1.460	0.144	0.133	2.047
SD 2025	0.277	0.114	0.121	0.760	0.260	0.150	1.221
Alert 3	0.640	0.176	0.203	2.220	0.404	0.283	3.267
Alert 2	0.916	0.290	0.324	2.980	0.664	0.433	4.488
Alert 1	1.193	0.403	0.446	3.740	0.924	0.584	5.709

SPIs

A positive month for HRCs, with only three above target and no alerts. In this edition we delve into the loss of separation trend with some important articles, whilst the regulator is looking into root causes. While there was another runway incursion, however, runway incursions and excursions remain the lowest categories. Operators are reminded to report unauthorised runway use.

Safety Thought for the Month

"If you think you shouldn't - you shouldn't. Don't play chicken with your passenger's lives." - Anon



Stay Safe!

Reporting



Dear Stakeholders,

In July I attended the 11th ICAO AFI Aviation Week, held in Cairo, which reinforced the Africa-Indian Ocean (AFI) Region's commitment to improving aviation safety through stronger oversight, collaboration, and implementation of SARPs. While the detailed meeting conclusions are yet to be published, several important safety priorities were highlighted throughout the week.

A major focus was the continued implementation of the AFI Safety Plan, with emphasis on assisting States to strengthen their State Safety Oversight Systems, enhance SSP, and improve Els. Discussions also centred on National Aviation Safety Plans (NASPs), ensuring implementation and alignment with the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) 2026–2028.

Delegates reviewed regional safety performance and considered practical measures to address common operational challenges, including improving accident and incident investigation capability, strengthening safety performance monitoring, and supporting effective safety management throughout the region. Capacity development remained a recurring theme, recognising that competent inspectors and sustainable technical expertise are fundamental to effective oversight.

The AFI Plans Steering Committee reviewed progress on implementing the AFI Safety Plan work programme and considered future priorities such as resource mobilisation and harmonised implementation strategies to ensure continued progress. Particular attention was given to securing financial and technical support for regional safety initiatives and strengthening partnerships between ICAO, States, and industry.

The detailed outcomes and recommendations are expected to guide safety implementation activities across the AFI Region during 2026–2027.

As a take away, the meeting reaffirmed that safety challenges are best addressed collectively through the sharing of expertise and technical assistance missions. We will all stand to gain from the initiatives discussed in this important forum, through our own improvements and through assisting sister States improve.

Yours in Safety, Ms Toska Sem.

FLIGHT OPERATIONS WORKSHOP

On the 24th July, the Namibia Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) hosted an Operations Manual Workshop for aviation operators and industry stakeholders to strengthen understanding of the Flight Safety Document System (FSDS), Operational Control, and Ground Handling requirements. The workshop, attended by approximately 65 industry personnel, was organised by Flight Operations Inspector Mr. Zenas Shituula under the supervision of Ms. Vicki Mombola, Flight Operations Manager, and provided a platform for industry and the NCAA to exchange regulatory guidance and operational best practices. The programme commenced with opening remarks by Ms. Mombola, followed by technical presentations and was moderated by Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Bornface Mahoshi.

The FSDS presentation highlighted the importance of maintaining an integrated, current and controlled set of operational documents, including operations manuals, standard operating procedures, checklists and training manuals. The system supports safe operations, regulatory compliance, standardisation, and effective coordination between flight operations, maintenance, and ground services. Reference was made to the relevant provisions of NAMCAR Part 121, 127, and 135 and their associated Technical Standards, Directives, and Advisory Pamphlets, and reference was made AP 1/1/2/4/3-12 on FSDS.

The Operational Control session defined operational control as the authority and responsibility to initiate, conduct, and terminate a flight. Participants were reminded that operators must clearly document operational-control procedures, identify authorised personnel, and ensure responsibilities are understood through training. Applicable requirements of NAMCAR Parts 121, 127, and 135 were discussed including Flight Operations Officer and Flight Follower training, referenced in NAMCATS 121.03.10.

The Ground Handling presentation emphasised the role of ground operations in supporting flight safety, efficiency, and compliance. Key activities included aircraft handling, passenger and baggage services, refuelling, servicing, and cargo operations, with emphasis on maintaining effective oversight of outsourced providers.

The workshop concluded that comprehensive operations manuals, effective operational control, robust document management, and well-managed ground handling are fundamental to safe and compliant operations. Participants were advised of the NCAA Industry Visits Action Plan for 2026–2027, noting that NCAA welcomes active engagement and communication. Q&A on regulatory and operational matters followed. The strong attendance reflected the industry's commitment to continuous improvement and enhanced aviation safety.

TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS



PERSONAL SMS

An SMS is inherently a safety management system implemented by an organisation or company. Part 140 requires SMS from all certificate holders. You may have interacted with SMS within your ATO or ARO, an AMO also requires an SMS as does an AOC or FOP holder. Whenever you are interacting with these organisations you should be aware of their SMS - through attitudes, behaviour, and reporting systems.



However, when you are not interacting with an SMS it does not mean safety should be forgotten! Even less so - when you are operating as an individual you need to be more safety conscious and apply personal minimum and safety standards throughout every aspect of your aviation tasks. Think of this as a “Personal SMS” and apply the mentality when working within an organisation with an SMS or when operating completely alone.

In a personal SMS, the first aspect should be health. If you are not healthy you are not safe. The “I’M SAFE” acronym works well - illness, medication, stress, alcohol, fatigue, emotion. Any of these items alone signals a no-go for an aviation operation, and remember, if you think you shouldn’t you shouldn’t. Think of this as the policy pillar of your personal SMS. Following up on health, is HIRM – hazard identification and risk assessment. In June we talked about TEM briefings as a personal risk assessment - it is important to assess your operation or planned daily tasks for risk and make a go/no-go decision. Without methodically analysing risk you won’t be able to avoid those hazards that cause unacceptable risks. Safety assurance means continuous improvement - a post shift or post flight debrief or review can be applied to help you identify anything that could be done better and enhance your future performance. Finally safety promotion - if you learned something about safety today, share it!



Safety should be an attitude that flows through our whole consciousness. Applying personal SMS mentality will start to make safety second nature, your risk window will shrink, and slowly but surely our accident rate will lower.

As always, for mandatory reporting, email both incidents@ncaa.na and daaii@mwt.gov.na. For voluntary, confidential, or anonymous reports, follow the secure [Confidential Reporting Link](#).

SAFETY OCCURRENCES

JULY 2026



WILDLIFE STRIKES (VOLUNTARY, MEDIUM RISK, AGA)

The following five bird encounters and one wildlife encounter were experienced in July.

Wildlife	Events and near misses		
No.	AD	Phase	Details
2	FYWH	Landing	Unknown
1	FYWH	Takeoff	Unknown
2	FYWE	Landing	Unknown, Lapwing
1	FYDN	Landing	Springbok

Crews, ATS, and aerodromes are advised to utilise avoidance techniques year-round - namely minimise time in the bird strike window, clear runways before arrivals, perform runway inspections at uncontrolled aerodromes, and keep a good lookout at all times. A 12-month wildlife assessment programme is underway at FYWH.

The below table shows historical statistical data for wildlife strikes:

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
2026	4.396	3.541	5.114	2.043	2.073	1.980	3.109						85
2025	1.533	1.104	1.505	2.956	1.148	0.957	0.913	1.377	0.447	0.645	1.067	3.023	61
2024	2.042	0.786	0.000	1.615	1.106	0.599	1.799	1.131	0.464	0.431	3.941	0.000	67
2023	1.346	0.823	1.398	0.696	0.623	0.966	0.471	0.438	0.525	1.192	1.116	1.538	42
2022	0.846	0.739	1.126	1.272	1.308	2.350	1.877	0.219	0.250	0.679	0.684	1.925	50
2021	2.864	7.380	8.123	2.052	3.745	4.223	0.000	2.778	0.000	1.855	0.835	0.000	74

SAFETY OCCURRENCES

JULY 2026



TECHNICAL FAULTS (MANDATORY, **LOW RISK**, AIR/OPS)

There were thirteen technical events reported this month.

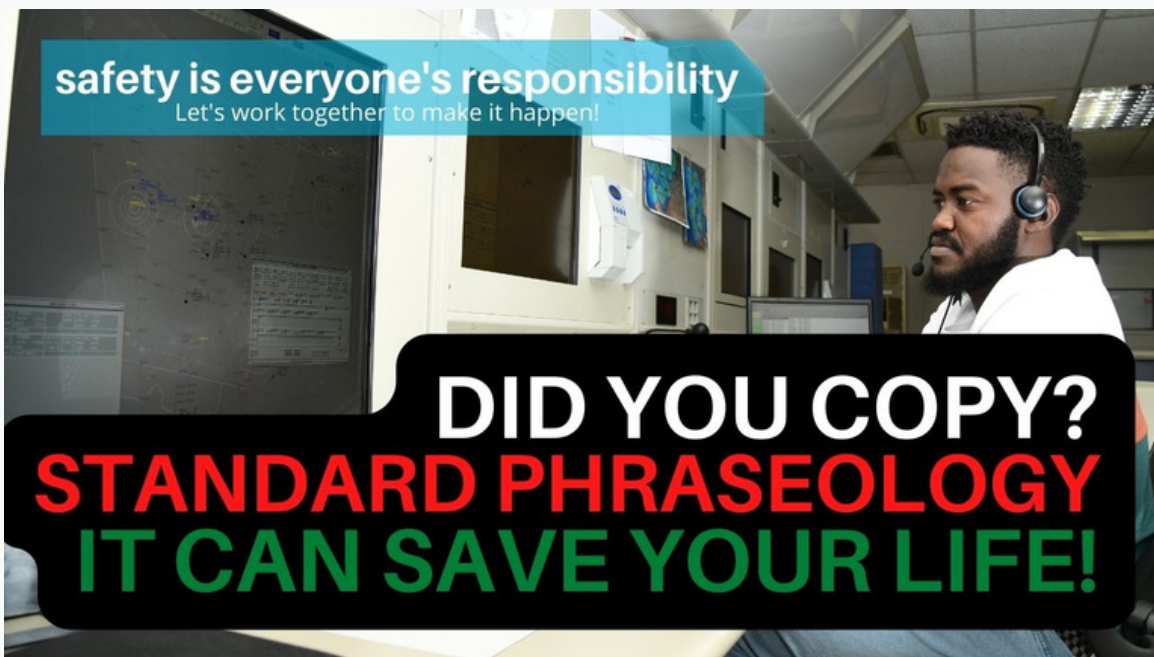
No.	Fault	Type
4	Gear faults	Piston, turbine
3	Flat tyre	Piston, turbine
1	Bleed failure	Jet
1	Instrument failure	Piston
1	Strobe and courtesy light failure	Turbine
1	Radio communications failure	Piston
1	Electrical failure	Piston
1	Unspecified	Piston

AMO personnel are again reminded of the critical importance of the elements in NAMCATS Part 140 Appendix A, for identification of trends that an individual AMO may not detect and to ensure appropriate corrective action. AMOs, ATOs, and AOCs should always ensure to submit the closure report by the AMO when there is a technical event, either via the PRAM or directly from the AMO.

A report of a failure from one AMO was raised as an SDR due to verbal notification that it has occurred to another operator. If reports are filed we will be alerted officially not through hearsay and corrective action will be swift and effective.

SAFETY OCCURRENCES

JULY 2026



ANSP RELATED EVENTS (MANDATORY, **LOW RISK**, ANSSO)

The following five Air Navigation Services events occurred.

No.	Fault	Area
1	Radar and primary radio failure	FYWF
1	Relays failed in North West*	FYWF
1	All relays and telephone lines failed	FYWF APP
2	Part 65 non-compliances	FYWH

Radar faults are being monitored separately to determine the level of probability (as reported on page 4). As an interim mitigation, pending full replacement equipment, reinstatement of procedural ratings is under investigation.

*Note: Once again a report was received indicating the fault had been existing for some time. Never assume someone else reported! If there is a facility failure report it. If you are short of time, try the confidential reporting link which is somewhat shorter and quicker process and can even be done on your phone.

SAFETY OCCURRENCES

JULY 2026



AERODROME RELATED EVENTS (HAZARD, **LOW RISK**, AGA)

An operator raised the issue of parking at HKIA, indicating that, while the event which prompted the hazard report was related to proximity to fuel, without proper marking on the apron there is potential for a ground collision if apron markings are not available.

AGA has asked the Aerodrome Operator to respond on the matter.

SAFETY OCCURRENCES

JULY 2026



GO AROUNDS AND DIVERSION EVENTS (VOLUNTARY, **LOW RISK**, OPS/ANSSO)

The following table shows go-around and diversion events.

No.	Details	Intended
6	Go arounds due to unstable approach	FYWH, FYWE
1	Go around due to traffic (non-simultaneous movements)	FYWH
1	Diversion due to operations	FYMW
1	Diversion due to technical (non-specified)	FYWE
2	Diversions due to weather	FYSM, FYAS

Crews are advised to stay go-around and diversion minded at all times to counter get-there-itis and to remain vigilant for weather and other hazards. Always know your weather minima and stick to them.

SAFETY OCCURRENCES

JULY 2026

LOSS OF SEPARATION (MANDATORY, MEDIUM RISK, OPS/ANSSO)

Two aircraft, joining the circuit, came into close proximity when the sequence of traffic was not clearly assigned and circuit sequencing not clearly specified.

ATS - always pass traffic information and sequencing, if the sequencing seems incorrect, don't be afraid to change it, using "report before turning base" is always helpful. Crew - ask for information where in doubt, or request a sequence change if needed, don't be afraid to indicate "unable" if the sequence is too tight or your profile will become unstable, for example. If you are told you are number two in the circuit always make sure you have number one in sight (three - two and one, etc.). For crew and ATS - take care with extending downwind FYWE RWY 01 - it has a very finite limit!

An aircraft on final in an unmanned visual circuit failed to allow sufficient room for the preceding aircraft to backtrack, resulting in a go-around. The aircraft on final only became aware of the preceding aircraft when they notified them directly by callsign.

Always maintain good situational awareness at unmanned aerodromes, especially in high density VFR traffic zones. Listen out, look out, see and be seen, hear and be heard.

Two VFR aircraft in uncontrolled airspace reported at different levels, whereupon one aircraft obtained a visual of the other aircraft at the same level.

Always report your level and location accurately at all times.

SAFETY OCCURRENCES

JULY 2026



NON COMPLIANCE WITH PART 65 (MANDATORY, **MEDIUM RISK**, ANSSO/PEL)

There were two reported occurrences of non-compliance with Part 65 both related to shift handover. In one event, a shift arrived late; in a second there was an inadequately qualified relief shift.

The first bursary students left for study and another intake is already in the planning stage, ATS are reminded to report all incidents of non-compliance with Part 65. If needed, make use of the confidential occurrence reporting link.



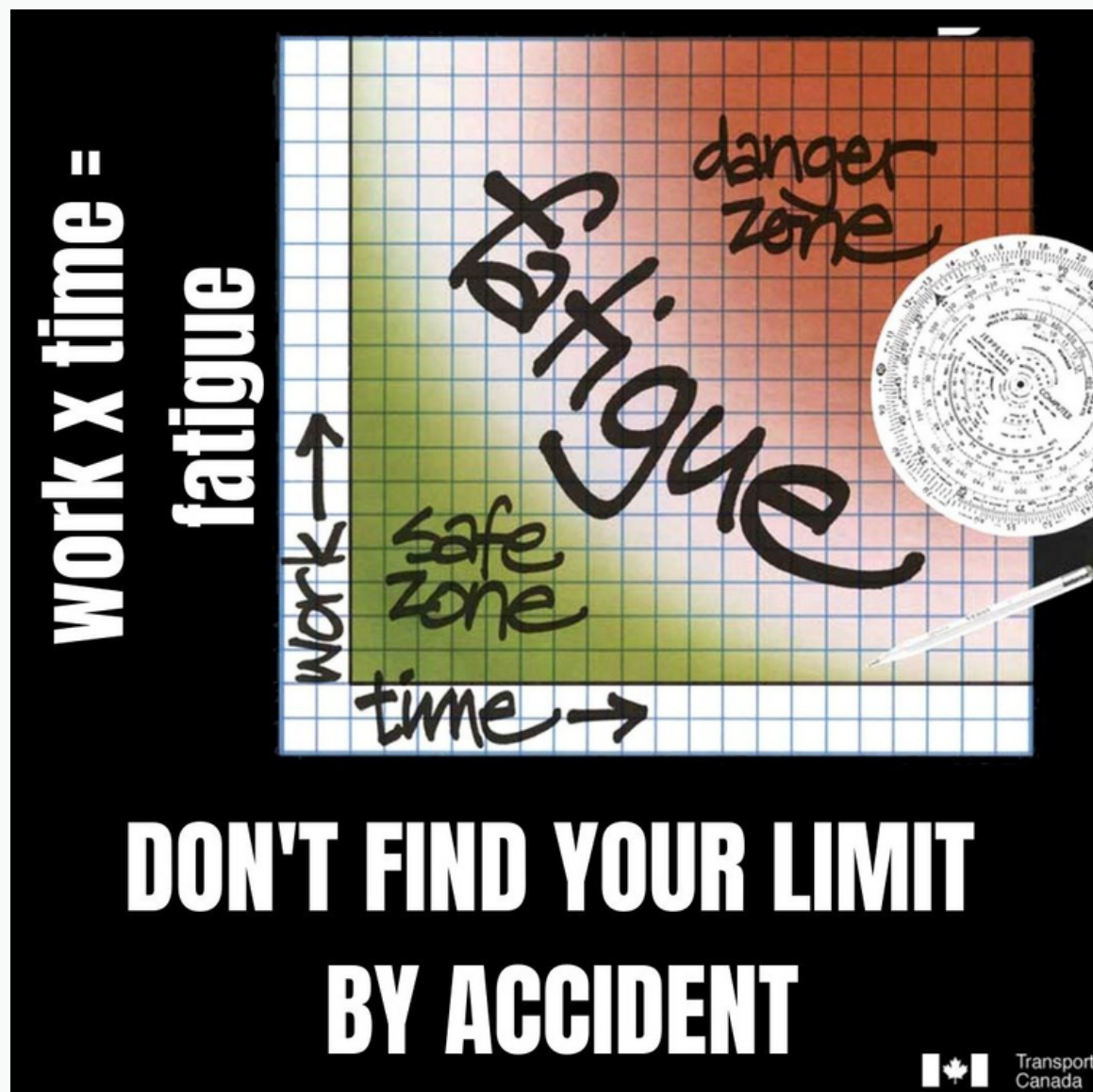
SAFETY OCCURRENCES

JULY 2026

WORKPLACE LABOUR LAW (MANDATORY, MEDIUM RISK, OPS)

A pilot was rostered to work over 5 hours without an adequate break, in contravention of the Namibian labour law.

While the flight and duty periods are silent on this aspect, it makes sense that any individual would require a comfort break at a minimum of every 5 hours to maintain fitness to fly, control, repair, etc. and for this reason it is a legal requirement under the labour law for all employers to adhere to.



SAFETY OCCURRENCES

JULY 2026

VFR DEPARTURE IN IMC (MANDATORY, **HIGH RISK**, AIR)

An aircraft was observed taking off in very poor visibility, estimated at not more than 500m, from a VFR aerodrome (no lights, no departure procedure).

This matter is taken very seriously, and has been assigned for investigation and if confirmed, constitutes a principle of exception, and will attract enforcement action.

SKYDIVE CONFLICT (HAZARD, **LOW RISK**, OPS)

A report was received that skydivers sometimes land on the apron/taxiways rather than the designated drop-zones.

Communication was made with the parachuting association, and they are addressing the issue with their members, further discussions are underway with airport management regarding facilities to improve transit from the drop-zone to the clubs' facilities.

ABNORMAL RUNWAY CONTACT (MANDATORY, **MEDIUM RISK**, OPS/PEL)

Two training flights experienced abnormal runway contact when the tail contacted the ground during touchdown following an abnormal flare.

If things go wrong during the flare, don't be afraid to go around. Late go-arounds are also good practice during training sorties. Don't try to rescue a bad approach or incorrect flare - go around.



Read/Hear Backs

Pilot's read-back must be complete and clear to ensure a complete and correct understanding by the controller.

The action of reading back a clearance **gives the controller an opportunity to confirm that the message has been correctly received, and if necessary, to correct any errors.**



Standard phraseology **reduces the risk that a message will be misunderstood and aids the read-back/hear-back process so that any error is quickly detected.** Ambiguous or non-standard phraseology is a frequent causal or contributory factor in aircraft accidents and incidents

An uncorrected erroneous read-back (known as a hear-back error) may lead to a deviation from the intended clearance and may not be detected until the controller observes the deviation on his/her situational display.



The flight crew must read back to the air traffic controller safety-related parts of ATC clearances and instructions. The following items must always be read back:



- Route clearance
- Holding instructions
- Any route and holding point specified in a taxi clearance
- Any clearances, conditional clearances or instructions must be read back or acknowledged in a manner to clearly indicate that they have been understood and will be complied with.
- Approach clearances
- Altimeter settings
- SSR codes
- Level instructions/restriction.
- Runway in use
- Heading and Speed instructions
- Clearances and instructions to enter, land on, take off from, hold short of, cross or backtrack on any runway



Read-back of a clearance should never be replaced by the use of terms such as "Roger", "Wilco" or "Copied". Likewise, a controller should not use similar terms to acknowledge a message requiring a definite answer (e.g. acknowledging a pilot's statement that an altitude or speed restriction cannot be met).

The controller must listen to the read-back to ascertain that the clearance or instruction has been correctly acknowledged by the flight crew and shall take immediate action to correct any discrepancies revealed by the read-back.

SAFETY FEEDBACK

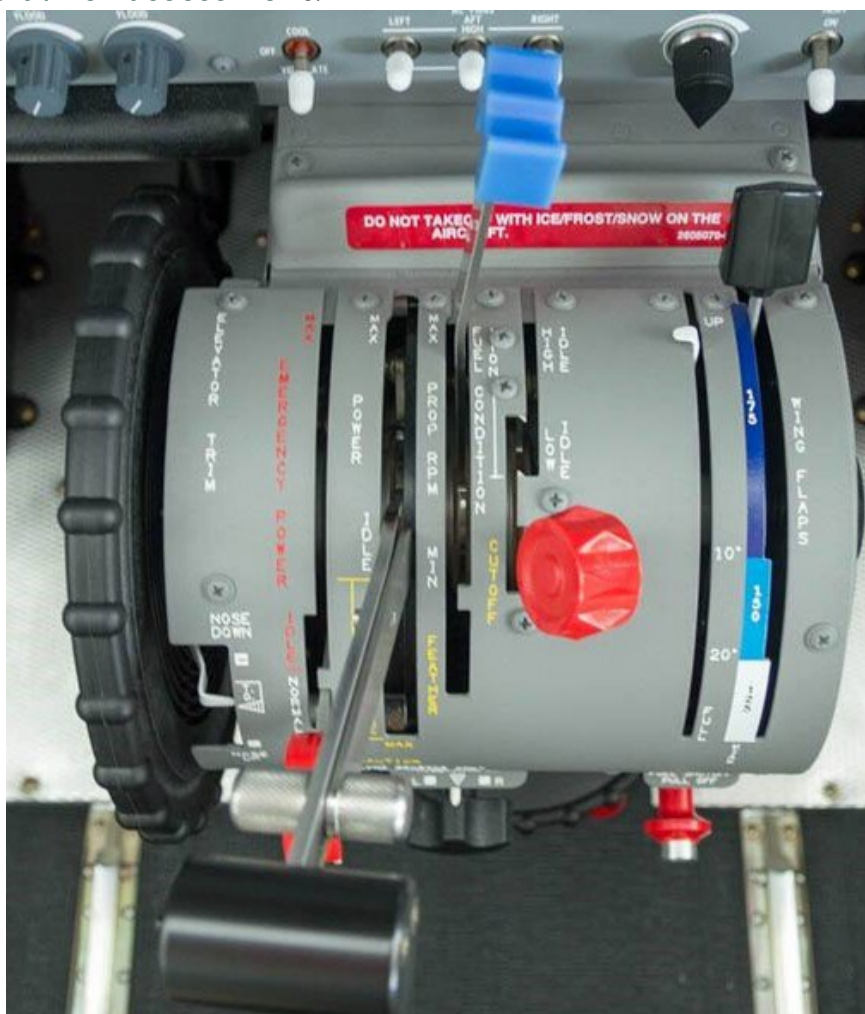
JULY 2026

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES (MANDATORY, MEDIUM RISK, OPS)

In June there was a report on a brake failure leading to a minor low-speed runway excursion. The operator provided a follow up indicating the brakes had become glazed due to the power setting/downhill/tailwind combination required by the company SOPs.

However, that is not where the investigation ended. The charter operator, frequenting short and/or soft gravel/sand airstrips, through proactive HIRM, identified an issue of moving the power lever to Low Idle during a critical phase of flight having potential to lead to inadvertent selection of cut-off. As a result the SOP was changed to require taxi in high idle at all times. A warning - operating contrary to the POH should be done with a careful risk assessment!

Management of change can bring about unintended consequences, for example, a runway excursion in this case, fortunately at low speed. Whenever a systematic change is required, particularly if not a standard POH procedure, it is essential to review all the potential risks and then determine the best course of action. It is not to say the operator did not already do this, rather, it is another example of the need for refinement and reassessment. The operator subsequently, after completion of an MOC, changed the SOP to require selection of Low Idle once at a safe speed and clear of the runway.



INTERNATIONAL OCCURRENCES

JULY 2026

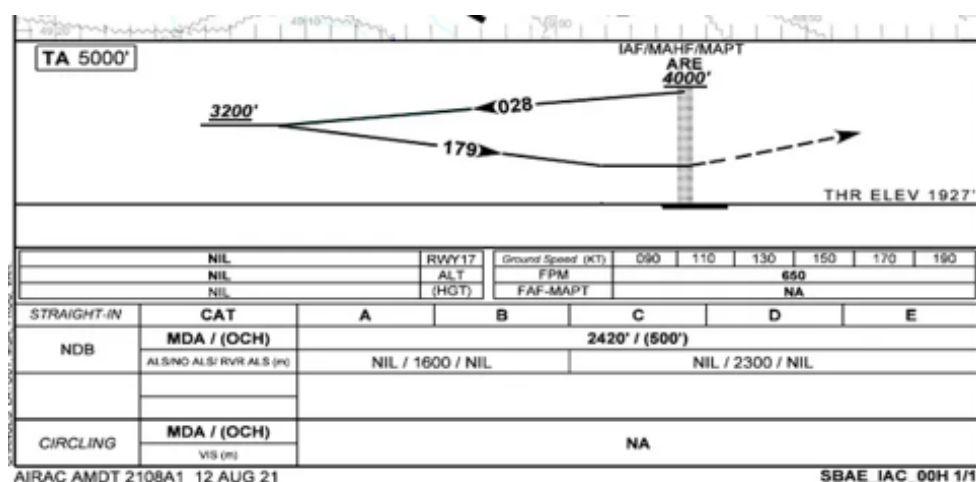
UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The wording used for altitude and flight level clearances, expressions such as "Climb to altitude 5,000 feet" and "Descend Flight Level 100" has been deliberately chosen to eliminate ambiguity and reduce the risk of misunderstanding built on lessons learned.

Flying Tiger Line Flight 66, a Boeing 747 freighter crashed while on approach to Kuala Lumpur on 19 February 1989. During the approach, air traffic control instructed the aircraft to "descend two four zero zero.". ATC intended the aircraft to descend to 2,400 feet. The flight crew, however, interpreted the transmission as "descend to 400 feet" and read back "four zero zero." The incorrect readback was not detected by the controller, and the aircraft descended below the minimum safe altitude before striking terrain approximately 6.5 nautical miles from the runway. The accident claimed the lives of all four crew members.

Although the investigation identified several contributing factors—including navigation errors, ineffective crew coordination, and failure to respond appropriately to Ground Proximity Warning System alerts—the ambiguous wording of the altitude clearance became an enduring example of the importance of standardized radiotelephony. It demonstrated that even a seemingly minor phrase can have serious consequences when combined with other operational factors.

As a response, initially the word "to" was removed from level change. But this had unintended consequences - "descend altitude 2,000ft" could invariably mean descend by two thousand feet or descend to two thousand feet.



INTERNATIONAL OCCURRENCES

JULY 2026

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

ICAO's response to such lessons has been to promote phraseology that avoids confusion. Rather than simply saying "Descend 2,500 feet," which could be interpreted as either descending to an altitude of 2,500 feet or descending by 2,500 feet, or descend to 500ft, controllers use "Descend to altitude two five zero zero feet." The addition of the word "altitude" immediately removes any number ambiguity and "to" makes it clear that the instruction refers to a target altitude rather than the amount of descent required.

Flight levels follow a different convention. ICAO deliberately omits the word "to" before flight levels, using phraseology such as "Climb Flight Level 180" or "Descend Flight Level 90." This distinction avoids confusion between the spoken word 'to' and the numeral 'two', while clearly distinguishing flight levels from altitudes where the by confusion would not be applicable, so "to" is removed.

These refinements are consistent with ICAO's broader philosophy of radiotelephony: every clearance should have one clear meaning, every readback should be easily verified, and every transmission should minimise the possibility of misunderstanding. The use of the words 'altitude', 'height' and 'flight level', together with the careful use of the word 'to', is therefore far more than a matter of grammar, it is an essential safety barrier developed through decades of operational experience.

Today, pilots and air traffic controllers may not consciously think about why these phrases are used, but each word reflects lessons learned. Standard phraseology, combined with disciplined readback and hearback procedures, remains one of aviation's most effective defences against loss of separation and controlled flight into terrain.

Stay safe - stay standard!

SAFETY ARTICLE

LOSS OF SEPARATION

Communication errors are one of the most persistent threats in aviation. We are both each other's safety net. Crews should challenge ambiguous instructions, ATC should be vigilant of erroneous readbacks, and both should remain critically aware of and alert traffic in conflict, and always adhere to standard phraseology.

Safety research identifies two primary communication error categories that are most relevant to the current Windhoek environment:

1. Readback Errors

A readback error occurs when a pilot reads back an ATC clearance incorrectly or acknowledges with an incomplete message. Common triggers include:

- High controller workload during training handovers.
- Pattern-matching by the pilot's brain - the mind "hears" the expected instruction rather than the actual one.
- Frequency congestion causing partial or full transmission loss.
- Fatigue on either side of the exchange.

2. Hearback Errors

A hearback error occurs when the controller fails to detect an incorrect pilot readback. The clearance the pilot has acknowledged is wrong, but neither party is aware of the divergence until the deviation becomes apparent on radar or visually. Studies by SKYbrary and the Flight Safety Foundation confirm that hearback errors are statistically more dangerous than readback errors alone because the divergence is invisible to both parties.

"Research published in the International Journal of Humanities Education and Social Sciences (2024) confirms that pilot-controller communication errors are the most common factor combination in high-severity aviation occurrences worldwide."



SAFETY ARTICLE

LOSS OF SEPARATION

The following strategies for crew to apply to avoid readback/hearback errors should be implemented, in compliance with ICAO Doc 4444 and Doc 9432.

Apply Strict Readback Discipline

- Read back ALL ATC clearances in full — altitude, heading, speed, routing, and runway designators. Always include your call sign in the readback.
- Do not abbreviate. Do not assume.
- If you are unsure of what you heard, say "Say again" immediately. This is not a failure — it is professional airmanship.

Cross-Check Instructions Against Known Information

- Compare every ATC instruction against the published procedure, your charted altitude profile, and your situational awareness.
- If a descent clearance would place you below the minimum sector altitude (MSA) before the appropriate fix — challenge it. Confirm whether an altitude instruction makes procedural sense before acting on it.

Recognise Triggers in a Training Environment

- Longer-than-usual response delays from ATC (supervisor review of trainee calls).
- Unusual phrasing or hesitant delivery.
- Instructions that are repeated or amended shortly after initial issue.
- Increased radio traffic as the supervisor intervenes.
- When these cues are present, heighten your communication vigilance. Do not rush readbacks to match a perceived controller tempo.

Cockpit/Tower Gradient

- ICAO standards unequivocally give the pilot-in-command (PIC) authority to deviate from an ATC instruction when safety requires it.
- If you receive an instruction you believe to be unsafe, query it: "[Callsign] — unable, please confirm instruction, we show [your information]"
- ATC exists to support your operation, not to override your safety judgement and they may not be fully aware of your performance or capabilities.
- If you action a questionable instruction due to time pressure, advise ATC immediately: "[Callsign] complying, however we query this clearance."

SAFETY ARTICLE

LOSS OF SEPARATION

Single-Pilot Operations

- Apply the same discipline without the support of a second crew member.
- Workload management is critical — do not allow cockpit task saturation to compromise your communication vigilance.
- Use sterile cockpit discipline below transition altitude (or 10,000ft for higher performance aircraft): all non-essential conversation ceases. If an instruction arrives at a high-workload moment (gear selection, configuration change), it is entirely appropriate to say: "[Callsign], standby" before committing to a readback.

Remember

ALWAYS read back clearances in full, including call sign and all safety-critical elements.
ALWAYS cross-check ATC instructions against your charts, procedure, and situational awareness before actioning.
NEVER assume an implied clearance — if it was not explicit, request clarification.
ALWAYS query any instruction that conflicts with your information or that seems unusual — you have both the right and the duty.
ALWAYS report any anomalous ATC communication to the SMS after landing.

Reporting

Remember that reporting is not about exposing someone else or yourself, it is about data trending, learning lessons, fixing systematic errors, and improving safety. Loss of separation events and other significant safety issues on frequency must be reported. If you think there is a lesson - report! If in doubt - report!

Useful Phrases from Doc 9432:

Phrase	Use
"UNABLE"	<i>"I cannot comply with your request, instruction, or clearance." Note. — UNABLE is normally followed by a reason.</i>
"SAY AGAIN"	<i>"Repeat all, or the following part, of your last transmission."</i>
"CONFIRM"	<i>"I request verification of: (clearance, instruction, action, information)."</i>
"SPEAK SLOWER"	<i>"Reduce your rate of speech."</i>
"STANDBY"	<i>"Wait and I will call you."</i>
"WORDS TWICE"	<i>"Communication is difficult. Please send every word or group of words twice." or "Since communication is difficult, every word or group of words in this message will be sent twice."</i>

HIRM

NCAA again invites all stakeholders to keep a lookout and report any hazardous observations, attitudes, or precursor events. The greater our awareness of hazards, the more effectively our system can move from reactive to predictive safety management. **Together we can make the skies safer!** And don't forget you can report online or via email.

Updates

NCAA's long-awaited service charter was converted to a user friendly booklet and will be available to industry soon. Additionally a number of quality posters will soon be available throughout the NCAA facilities, showing commitment to upholding safety, security, and quality services.

Invitation to Contribute

Service providers and users are invited to contribute topics, ideas, articles, or questions to NCAA SSPQ department for consideration in our safety publications or safety workshops. Remember, the safety system only works with participation, and information sharing is key to continuous improvement and achieving our global aviation safety goals.

Did you have an experience that taught you more about staying safe? Share it with others!

Further information requests, submissions, or queries can be sent to:

email: spq@ncaa.na

phone: +264 83 235 2468



GLOSSARY

Term / Acronym	Meaning / Description	Term / Acronym	Meaning / Description
AGA	Aerodromes and Ground Aids – ICAO-defined sector responsible for the safety of airport infrastructure.	NAMCATS	Namibian Civil Aviation Technical Standards – technical regulatory requirements in Namibia.
AIP	Aeronautical Information Publication – a document published to provide information essential to air navigation.	NAMCAR	Namibian Civil Aviation Regulations – the core aviation law in Namibia.
AMO	Approved Maintenance Organisation – a facility authorised to perform aircraft maintenance.	NTCA	Non-Type Certified Aircraft – aircraft not holding a type certificate under ICAO Annex 8.
ANSSO	Air Navigation Services and Safety Oversight – refers to the oversight of air navigation services.	OCC	Operations Control Centre – typically responsible for dispatch and operational control.
AOC	Air Operator Certificate – certification issued to an airline allowing it to operate commercial air services.	OPS	Flight Operations Section – department overseeing flight safety, compliance, and investigations.
ATO	Approved Training Organisation – an entity authorised to conduct pilot or aviation personnel training.	PRAM	Person Responsible Aircraft Maintenance
ATS	Air Traffic Services – includes services such as air traffic control (ATC), flight information, and alerting services.	QMS	Quality Management System – a structured system for quality assurance and continuous improvement.
AVSEC	Aviation Security – the part of aviation concerned with preventing unlawful interference or acts of sabotage.	RPAS	Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems – commonly referred to as drones.
CARTAP	Civil Aviation Technical Advisory Panel	SDCPS	Safety Data Collection and Processing System – structured data management tool to support SMS.
CHT	Cylinder Head Temperature	SMS	Safety Management System – a systematic approach to managing safety, including organizational structures and procedures.
CNS	Communication, Navigation, Surveillance – essential infrastructure for air traffic management.	SPI	Safety Performance Indicator – a data-driven metric used to monitor safety performance.
Doc 9859	ICAO Safety Management Manual – foundational guidance for States and service providers on SMS and SDCPS.	SPT	Safety Performance Target – a specific safety goal to be achieved.
HIRM	Hazard Identification and Risk Management – a proactive safety management approach.	SSP	State Safety Programme – the national programme for managing aviation safety.
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization – UN body that sets global aviation standards.	TWG	Technical Working Group – an expert team working under the SSP to analyse safety data.
MET	Meteorological Services – aviation weather services.	UTC	Coordinated Universal Time – standard aviation time reference.
MEFT	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism – required for approvals in protected areas.	WHV	Hosea Kutako International Airport VOR