



JAMAICA CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

INVESTIGATION OF ACCIDENTS OR SERIOUS INCIDENTS INVOLVING CIVIL AVIATION AIRCRAFT

The Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority (JCAA) is responsible for investigating civil aircraft accidents and serious incidents occurring within Jamaica's territory. The JCAA also participates in investigations when a Jamaican-registered aircraft or a Jamaican air operator is involved in an accident in another territory. The authority to investigate accidents/serious incidents (occurrence) is embodied in the (Jamaica) Civil Aviation Act and the Civil Aviation Regulations.

Purpose of Investigations

The purpose of an investigation is to determine the circumstances and causal factors that may have contributed to the occurrence, in order to make safety recommendations, with the objective being to preserve life and prevent any recurrence of a similar nature. The aim is not to apportion blame or liability. The Minister of Transport, Works & Housing through the JCAA's Director General, appoints an Investigator- In-Charge (IIC) who is vested with the responsibility and authority to supervise and coordinate all resources, activities and personnel – both government and civilian, who are involved in the investigation. The Investigator-in-Charge is empowered by the Civil Aviation Act to act in the capacity of air accident investigator, and his/her role is gazetted and published soon after

the occurrence. Over the period of his/her appointment, the IIC is relieved of all other duties, for the duration of the investigation.

Initial Actions after an Accident

As soon as the Duty Officer of the Flight Safety Division (FSD) is informed of an occurrence, the first responders, including the Jamaica Constabulary Force, Jamaica Defence Force and other emergency service providers are contacted. Their primary responsibility is to ensure the well-being of survivors, by conducting search and rescue missions. The next priority is ensuring that all evidence associated with the occurrence is secured and preserved, so that useful information, critical for the successful outcome of the investigation, is placed in the custody of the investigating team. Efforts are made to collect as much evidence as soon as possible from all available sources. As a priority, the Flight Data and Cockpit Voice Recorders ("*Black Boxes*"), for aircraft so equipped, are to be located and quarantined. These electronic equipment typically provide investigators essential information on the precise conditions leading up to and just before the occurrence.

Depending on the magnitude of the occurrence, the FSD's Duty Officer, through the Director, Flight Safety, will determine the level of response. Normally, two specialised Air Accident Investigators are assigned to an investigation to include expertise from Airworthiness and Flight Operations. However, additional expertise from the FSD may be assigned as necessary.

Powers of an Investigator

Investigators have vested powers to conduct and record interviews of anyone involved in the occurrence, directly or indirectly. They can receive signed statements or responses to queries.

The investigator is authorized to conduct tests and examinations on the aircraft and its components. As such, the investigator is empowered to take possession of the wreckage, equipment and all documents related to the occurrence. Electronic records must be made available to the investigators in its raw form, without interpretation, unless requested by the IIC.

The Investigation Process

Depending on the magnitude and/or complexity of the occurrence, the investigation may take several months or years to be completed. The accident investigation team will aim to understand all conditions that contributed to the occurrence, by looking at all possible factors, which will include aerodrome, air traffic control, aircraft maintenance, pilots and cabin crew operations. The aircraft crashworthiness, survivability, aviation security and meteorological conditions are assessed. Examination of the aircraft's structure, engines, landing gear and cabin safety equipment gives clues that aid improvements in aircraft design. Other areas of scrutiny include aircraft, operator and flight crew certification; Air Traffic Control procedures; aircraft design; operational procedures and governing regulations. Multi-party, multi-national and multi-discipline participation are critical for the completion of an accurate accident report to further ensure the safe operations of aircraft. The final report is published, following the completion of all due processes inclusive of the determination of the contributory factors and circumstances and is based on extensive analysis of the facts of the occurrence.

Flight Safety Division
Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority