



Australian Government
Civil Aviation Safety Authority

HEAD OF FLYING OPERATIONS GUIDE



WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR:

- anyone who may appoint a Head of Flying Operations
- anyone who currently holds, or intends to hold, the position of Head of Flying Operations
- anyone who has a responsibility to support a Head of Flying Operations
- anyone involved in recruiting a Head of Flying Operations.

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INTRODUCTION

Every aviation operator has the fundamental obligation to ensure that air operations are safely conducted.

This relies heavily on the competency and professionalism of key roles within the operator's organisational structure. These key roles are described in the legislation as key personnel.

The Head of Flying Operations (HOFO) is a key role. How you perform in this role is critical to fulfilling an operator's safety obligations.

Compliance with the legislation helps an organisation to establish an acceptable level of safety. However, not all decision making can be based on the minimum legislative requirements. As the HOFO you are a role model. You are committed to continual improvement, helping to shape and drive the safety culture in an organisation.

Traditionally, in medium to small aviation organisations the HOFO has been called the Chief Pilot. While this guide is for the HOFO, many of the qualifications, experience and responsibilities are similar for the Head of Operations (HOO).



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THE ROLE

The HOFO has primary responsibility for and must manage the safety and compliance of the flying operations. You are responsible for monitoring and maintaining compliance and reporting to the CEO about the level of compliance with both the legislation and the operator's exposition.

Therefore, the HOFO must have a good working knowledge of the civil aviation legislation that is relevant to their operation, and an excellent knowledge of the content of the exposition.

Importantly, you are part of the team of key personnel managing the air operator's certificate (AOC). As HOFO you must have a focus on regulatory compliance and as such you provide a critical link between the AOC holder and CASA. A HOFO must have the knowledge, operational and aviation safety management experience and strength of character to balance the sometimes-conflicting demands of safety and commerce.

To be appointed to the position of HOFO, you must have a satisfactory record in the conduct and management of air operations.

To be fully effective you will need all these skills as soon as you commence the role. You will also need to have completed familiarisation training for the role within your organisation.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The minimum qualifications and experience for a HOFO are:

- the required pilot licence – for single pilot operations at least a CPL, for any other operation an ATPL
- a pilot type or class rating for a type or class of aeroplane or rotorcraft that is used to conduct a significant proportion of the operations
- at least 500 hours of flying experience on the type of aeroplane or rotorcraft to be used for a significant proportion of the operations
- at least 6 months experience in the conduct or management of air operations
- a satisfactory record in the conduct or management of air operations
- sufficient safety and regulatory knowledge to conduct operations safely and in accordance with the exposition and civil aviation rules.

Reference Civil Aviation Safety Regulations (CASR) Part 119.135.

The precise detail of your qualifications and experience will also depend on which CASR Parts the organisation is operating under.

Your organisational and operational experience needs to be commensurate with the size and complexity of the organisation and its operations.

The HOFO does not need to be qualified on every aircraft type or in every role/function performed under their operator's AOC. In this case, you could be supported by a role or type specialist manager. However, you are still accountable and responsible for managing these specialised operations.



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In smaller and less complex operations, any combination of the roles of CEO, HOFO and Head of Training and Checking (HOTC) can be filled by the same person. Where this occurs, you will need to have a considerable amount of relevant aviation business management, operational safety and personnel management and training and checking experience. This experience would be expected to be greater than that for a HOFO that is not fulfilling any additional key positions.

It is important for the HOFO to be able to interact with an operator's day-to-day operations. This is particularly true for smaller, less complex organisations. It will be unlikely for you to be able to fulfill the role if you cannot do this and impossible if you are never actually on site.

If you have other work commitments inside or outside aviation, you may not have adequate time to discharge the duties and responsibilities of a HOFO. Both you and your operator need to carefully assess this. An adequate organisational structure and filled key personnel positions are not only regulatory requirements but also conditions of the operator's AOC under the *Civil Aviation Act 1988*.

While you can work as a part-time HOFO for a smaller organisation, your employer should be able to demonstrate how you manage your workload. If you're working for another organisation, then it should be considered that you are absent during this time and flying operations cannot be conducted.

We can also require additional qualifications or experience of a HOFO. If this is the case, we will give you notice in writing.

ON-GOING QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

A HOFO would normally be expected to maintain the qualifications they held when initially appointed.

If you lose currency/recency, your organisation should evaluate whether you can maintain effective supervision of operations and carry out your responsibilities. While there is no regulatory requirement for the HOFO to continue flying, first-hand operational experience is maintained by those who do.

For the non-flying HOFO, organisations would be expected to demonstrate that they have sufficient senior staff involved in daily flying operations who:

- are part of the organisational structure
- can provide supervision to junior members
- have the experience to identify items that need the attention of the HOFO or CEO.

You will also need specific processes to ensure these personnel report to the HOFO on these matters. This would include both regular reporting and the reporting of an immediate safety or compliance issue.



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RESPONSIBILITIES

The HOFO has overall responsibility for the flying operations. You do not need to perform each of these functions personally, except for certain matters where the regulations require the HOFO to personally report to the CEO.

In a small operation, the HOFO would be personally involved in much of the detail of their responsibilities. However, in a large operation with a larger number of senior staff, you may be supported by other staff.

While you can be supported by other employees, you cannot formally delegate your responsibilities to another person.

Where an operator has multiple bases, there must be a system to manage day to day operational issues which is documented in the exposition. The HOFO remains responsible for all operations but can be supported by other employees including a senior base pilot at each additional base.

HOFO responsibilities include:

- monitoring, maintaining and reporting to the CEO on the operator's compliance with the provisions of the civil aviation legislation and the exposition that apply to the flying operations
- ensuring that the operator's flight crew are provided with the information and documentation necessary to properly carry out their responsibilities
- ensuring the proper allocation and deployment of the operator's aircraft and personnel
- maintaining an operational library for flight crew.

Reference Civil Aviation Safety Regulations (CASR) Part 119.140



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Information for the flight crew

Ensuring the flight crew have the necessary information and documentation includes access to:

- the exposition
- the fatigue management processes and reporting system
- the rostering system
- the incident report system and SMS etc.
- the flight crew communication systems e.g., NOTAMs, safety notices and internal exposition amendment notifications.
- aircraft operational documentation and data, including the Aircraft Flight Manuals
- meteorological information for operational needs
- airways documentation
- flight planning information
- aerodrome documentation
- documentation required for international operations (if any).

Deployment and allocation

Ensuring the proper allocation and deployment of aircraft and personnel includes whether:

- the aircraft is appropriate to task
- aircraft serviceability requirements suitable for the task
- the aircraft has sufficient hours available until next service
- procedures are in place to manage the possibility of this aircraft becoming unserviceable away from base
- adequate facilities for passengers, crew and cargo are available at the destination and potential alternates aerodromes
- sufficient qualified crew are available
- there are any duty hours limitations or fatigue issues associated with the proposed task
- suitable rest facilities are available (if needed).

Operational library

Your operational library needs to comply with section 28BH of the *Civil Aviation Act 1988* and regulation 119.040. You are responsible for the maintenance of this library for flight crew members, keeping documents up to date and readily accessible. The documents can be accessible electronically.

The library should consist of:

- the civil aviation legislation that is relevant to your operations
- the parts of the AIP that are relevant to the operations
- if you are operating in foreign countries—the document for each of those countries that is equivalent to the AIP
- all information that is necessary to ensure safe operations about the flight of each type and model of aircraft you are using
- any other publications, information or data required for the reference library by the exposition.

This responsibility includes the necessary infrastructure to obtain the information/ data and for it to be updated. This includes computers and telecommunications equipment.

THE APPOINTMENT

We must be satisfied that you have the skills, knowledge and attitudes to be able to carry out the role effectively because of both the nature of the role and the obligations under the Act.

We will write to you to let you know if you need to do an assessment. Before this, we will conduct a desktop review.

In some cases, we will not require any further information. The nominee may be well known due to significant experience or a recent assessment which addressed the key criteria.

For example, you may be performing as HOFO for an air transport operation and transferring to another operator. We may then consider:

- how recently you have been assessed
- your performance on any previous assessment
- similarities or differences between your previous employer and your new one
- your performance as HOFO in any previous positions.

If your nomination is refused, you and your operator will be advised in writing of the reasons.



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THE INTERVIEW

We may need to further confirm that you are suitable for the role. This could mean an interview and/or a flight assessment could be required. We will advise you in writing if this becomes necessary.

We strongly recommend you prepare thoroughly for the interview. Familiarise yourself with regulatory references. Study your responsibilities and have a sound understanding of your operator's activities. The interview will also cover flight planning, loading and performance. This will be based the most complex aircraft type you are qualified on and that your operator will be using.

You may also need to do a flight assessment. In most cases, this will simulate the type of operation proposed or conducted by your operator. If the operation intends to operate under the IFR, an instrument approach will be included.

The CASA Inspector will be looking to confirm that you follow the procedures outlined in the exposition and that you comply with the relevant legislation.

REFERENCES

Acceptable means of compliance/guidance material (AMC/GM):

- Part 119 Australian air transport operators – certification and management

casa.gov.au/search-centre/acceptable-means-compliance-and-guidance-material

For more information about relevant Civil Aviation Safety Regulations (CASR) Parts 91, 119, 121, 133 and 135

casa.gov.au/rules/changing-rules/flight-operations-regulations-transition/about-flight-operations-regulations

casa.gov.au

