Australian Government
Civil Aviation Safety Authority

PROTOCOL

(OPS.08) Safety management system assessment

February 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our offices are located and the places to which we travel for work. We also acknowledge the Traditional Custodians' continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

Artwork: James Baban.

1. Purpose

This protocol is for the assessment of an operator's safety management system under Subpart 119.F, Division 138.B.6 and Subpart 142.G of the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998* (CASR).

CASA evaluates the overall effectiveness of an operator's safety management system (SMS), confirming that the SMS complies with the regulations, and assessing how suitable it is to the size, nature and complexity of the organisation's operations.

CASA considers a series of indicators based on the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO's) Annex 19 and ICAO Doc 9859—Safety Management Manual, and the evaluation aligns the ICAO SMS Framework with Subpart 119.F, Division 138.B.6 and Subpart 142.G of CASR.

2. Concept and philosophy

ICAO Annex 19 promotes a common approach to safety management across aviation domains; both for States and for organisations. The content in the associated principle (OPS.08) was taken from material prepared by the Safety Management International Collaboration Group (SM ICG), of which CASA's Safety Systems Branch is a member. The purpose of this group is to promote a common understanding of SMS / State Safety Program (SSP) principles and requirements, facilitating their application across the international aviation community.

The SM ICG developed an SMS evaluation tool in direct support to this common approach. This has been converted into the (OPS.08) protocol, principle and worksheet document suite to align with CASA's general assessment documentation.

The concept of evaluating SMS effectiveness supports the move from traditional, compliance-based oversight to performance-based oversight that focuses on how the SMS is performing. It provides a common baseline for SMS effectiveness evaluation that creates a sound basis for mutual acceptance of SMS.

3. Process

All administration tasks should follow standard regulatory service administration procedures (as applicable), in addition to the following:

a. Operators will submit the following application form (as applicable):

   i. Air Operator's Certificate / Associated Approvals form (CASA-04-5515)

   ii. Aerial Work Operations form (CASA-04-5505)

   iii. Flight Training Operator Certificate application form (CASA-04-5389).

b. Regservices will create a case in EAP to be assigned to a CASA inspector.

c. Regservices and the inspector should confirm that an EAP stop alert is not active.

d. All associated CASA staff must be knowledgeable of, and competent with, Principle (OPS.08), which provides details for the assessment of a safety management system.

e. The relevant sections of Worksheet (OPS.08) must be completed by the CASA inspector and saved as a PDF document in RMS, including:

   i. the assessment summary

   ii. the approval data sheet.

f. If the application is a significant change, the inspector must complete the relevant section on the approval data sheet and provide the revision details for the exposition.

g. The inspector must complete EAP in accordance with the EAP OAS Case Management - Regulatory Oversight Division (ROD) handbook (CASA-03-550).

The assessment must be endorsed by an independent person, see section 3.1 of this Protocol.

3.1 Recommendation endorsement

All recommendations must be endorsed by a separate person, normally a Manager Regulatory Services, prior to the delegate issuing the authorisation.

> The Manager Regulatory Services may assign the endorsement to another inspector.

The role of the endorser is to:

- ensure all sections of the worksheets been completed
- the assessment summary page has been completed
- the approval data sheet has been completed
- all worksheets and relevant documents have been filed in RMS
- the "Assessment" section of EAP has been fulfilled
- the "Create recommendation" section of EAP has been fulfilled

If satisfied the endorser will complete the "Endorse recommendation" section of EAP and forward the task to the delegate.

> If the assessing inspector holds the delegation for the authorisation, they can issue the authorisation.

4. List of supplements

Only the following supplements may be used in support of this protocol. The most recently approved versions will be found on the CASA document catalogue.

- Principle (OPS.08) Safety management systems assessment
- Worksheet (OPS.08) Safety management systems assessment.

5. Scope

The (OPS.08) protocol document suite is used to assess an applicant's SMS against the regulations that require such a system. Some authorisation holders may conduct operations under multiple CASR Parts, including Parts that do not require an SMS, for example Part 141. In this case, the SMS should be constructed to address all relevant operational Parts of CASR.

Although there is no specific approval of an SMS, if CASA issues a certificate to the applicant, CASA is taken to have issued an approval under regulation 119.075, 138.045 or 142.095 of CASR (as applicable).

> **Note:** Should there be an application for an SMS assessment that is not mandated by another CASR Part, the inspector may use this (OPS.08) protocol as guidance.

6. Competency requirements

To conduct the assessment, inspectors must have successfully completed the foundation training and advanced regulatory assessment training programs. Inspectors must also complete the safety management system – assess and approve course.

7. Associated legislation

Table 1.   Legislation associated with this protocol

Document	Title
Part 119 of CASR	Australian air transport operators—certification and management
Part 121 of CASR	Australian air transport operators—larger aeroplanes
Part 133 of CASR	Australian air transport operators—rotorcraft
Part 135 of CASR	Australian air transport operators—smaller aeroplanes
Part 138 of CASR	Aerial work operations
Part 142 of CASR	Integrated and multi-crew flight training, contracted training and contracted checking

8.   Guidance references

Table 2.   Guidance references applicable to this protocol

Document	Title
AC 1-01	Understanding the legislative framework
AC 119-01	Safety management systems for air transport operations
CASA-04-6210	SMS Gap analysis implementation tool
SMS kit	Resource kit to develop your safety management system

9.   ICAO references

Table 3.   ICAO references applicable to this protocol

Document	Title
Annex 19	Safety management
Doc 9859	ICAO Safety Management Manual

10. Revision history

Amendments/revisions of this protocol are recorded below in order of most recent first.

Table 4.   Revision history table

Version No.	Date	Parts/Sections	Details
2.1	January 2025	Part 3.0, new section 3.1	The addition of requirements relating to endorsement of significant change by an independent person.
2.0	March 2024	All	Various minor amendments and reformatting to align with latest template.
1.1	May 2022	All	Revised to include Part 142 references. Title change from 'Approval' to 'Assessment'.
1.0	December 2021	All	Initial issue.