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Hawker Beechcraft Corporation Flight Operations on Track for Full IS-BAO Certification



BY TEXTRON AVIATION

Company leads the industry in developing SMS for all flight operations

Hawker Beechcraft Corporation (HBC) is leading the industry in its efforts to develop a standardized Safety Management System (SMS) for all of its flight operations that is specifically designed to meet the International Standard for Business Aviation Operations (IS-BAO) registration. Introduced in 2002, IS-BAO is a code of best practices for flight operations developed by the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC), a non-profit, private sector consortium of associations representing the interests of business aviation around the globe. It essentially structures ISO 9000 principles to apply to aviation safety. Unlike government regulations for commercial aircraft operations, adopting the IS-BAO standard is a voluntary process designed to integrate all the best safety and operating procedures from various industry sources.

“It goes without saying that we should be leaders in establishing and promoting the standards for safety in our industry and IS-BAO is a logical and effective way to do that,” said Bob Blouin, HBC vice president, Flight Operations. “It is a measurable program that prescribes an audit every two years and stimulates ongoing self-audits to ensure currency, relevance and continuous improvement. The challenge for an aircraft manufacturer is that our operations are much broader and more diverse than a typical corporate flight department, so our approach to this is a major undertaking.”

As an airframe manufacturer, HBC faces a variety of situations that are not typically addressed by corporate flight departments. The nature of experimental, engineering and production flight test programs differs markedly from routine business aircraft operations. Pilots employed by manufacturers often fly a variety of aircraft. Test and demonstration pilots can be called upon to fly several different types under conditions that are seldom faced by their corporate counterparts, including formation flights, trans-oceanic ferry flights and extended customer support operations. All of these scenarios make the creation of an IS-BAO-compliant SMS a unique challenge.

To simplify this, HBC approached the process in phases by initially developing processes and procedures and creating models that are applicable to its Little Rock, Ark., Production Flight Test operation. Data and insights gained from developing and implementing an SMS for Little Rock are being adapted to utilize across the full spectrum of HBC’s Flight Operations to include its Government Business, Engineering and Experimental Flight Test, Production Flight Test, Demonstration and Corporate Transportation divisions, all of which are based in Wichita.

HBC has invested in three in-house IBAC-accredited auditors, which gives the company an advantage in expanding the guidelines and SMS program created in Little Rock to encompass all of its flight operations to meet or exceed the IS-BAO standard.

With requirements for IS-BAO registration complete for its Little Rock Flight Department, the company continues to work toward completion of the process for the remainder of its flight operations by the end of 2010.

Hawker Beechcraft Corporation is a world-leading manufacturer of business, special mission and trainer aircraft – designing, marketing and supporting aviation products and services for businesses, governments and individuals worldwide. The company’s headquarters and major facilities are located in Wichita, Kan., with operations in Salina, Kan.; Little Rock, Ark.; Chester, England, U.K.; and Chihuahua, Mexico. The company leads the industry with a global network of more than 100 factory-owned and authorized service centers. For more information, visit www.hawkerbeechcraft.com.

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