

MEDIA RELEASE
Aircraft incidents and accidents
24th August 2009

After a deadly year of aircraft accidents that sent Namibia's aviation safety reputation into a tailspin, the first half of 2009 has shown a significant drop in the number of plane accidents and incidents in Namibia.

The past year's succession of aircraft accidents – in which seven people were killed – has been like a wake-up call for Namibia's aviation industry and authorities. For the aviation sector in Namibia, this year has started on a much more encouraging note, with aircraft accident and incident figures showing a significant drop in the first six months of the year.

The number of aircraft accidents and incidents reported over the first half of 2009 is also the lowest number in the first six months of a year since 2005. In the first six months period of 2005, 37 accidents and incidents were registered and three lives were lost in aircraft accidents in Namibia. In the same period in 2006, 34 aircraft accidents and incidents, involving no loss of life were recorded.

The number of accidents and incidents then rose to 51 in the first half of 2007 and 28 in the first half of 2008. In the first six months of 2008, six lives were lost. All of these fatalities were as a result of an accident in which a Cessna 210 aircraft with a South African pilot and five Israelis crashed in Windhoek's Olympia residential area shortly after take-off from Eros Airport on January 11 last year.

An official investigation from this Ministry, into the cause of that crash, which was the deadliest aircraft accident in Namibian airspace in more than a decade, it was concluded that a combination of pilot errors, which included overloading the aircraft and choosing a short runway for the take-off in a hot day, had led to the accident.

It is worth to mention that no fatal aircraft accidents took place since January this year. Thirteen aircraft occurrences – made up of five accidents, eight incidents were registered in the first half of 2009. This is a drastic change on the previous four years.

While 2008, a year in which a total of seven people lost their lives in two fatal aircraft accidents was an unusually deadly year for Namibia's aviation sector, the number of aircraft accidents and incidents for the whole year was actually lower than in the three previous years.

In 2008, forty-nine (49) aircraft occurrences were recorded in Namibia. In 2007, 89 accidents and incidents were recorded, with four lives lost in two fatal accidents. In 2006, 83 accidents and incidents were reported in Namibia, with

two lives lost in two fatal crashes. Three lives were lost in two fatal crashes in 2005 and a total of 78 accidents and incidents were reported.

Statistics for the first six months of the past five years has proven that this year's occurrences rate has significantly dropped.

For the purpose of this media release, occurrence means accidents and incidents

Aircraft occurrences during the period of 1st January 2005 to 30 June 2005
Total occurrences were 37; fatal accidents 2, fatalities 3

Aircraft occurrences during the period of 1st January 2006 to 30 June 2006
Total occurrences were 34; fatal accidents 2; fatalities 2

Aircraft occurrences during the period of 1st January 2007 to 30 June 2007
Total occurrences: 51; fatal accidents 2; fatalities 4

Aircraft occurrences during the period of 1st January 2008 to 30 June 2008
Total occurrences: 9; fatal accidents 2; fatalities 7

Aircraft occurrences during the period of 1st January 2009 to 30 June 2009
Total occurrences: 13; fatal accidents 0; fatalities 0

The drop in accident figures for the last six months can be attributed to measures implemented by the Ministry of Works and Transport, i.e. Directorate of Civil Aviation, and the Directorate of Aircraft Accident Investigation. The improvement to the aviation safety and security is also attributed to Aircraft operators, Aircraft Maintenance Organizations.

Aircraft operators and maintenance companies have improved discipline and put in place more checks and balances as well as proper supervision. The assistance from the International Civil Aviation Organization experts is playing a major role in correcting serious safety deficiencies such as incorrect Air Operator Certificates, Operating specification, inadequate cockpit checklists and Operational Manuals. The ICAO airworthiness experts have also improved the maintenance practices, and aircraft operating without Certificates of Airworthiness.

The I.C.A.O team has instituted a series of seminars and workshops with Industry on maintenance, operations and licensing matters affecting the safety of aircraft. Safety related items noticed during surveillance activities have been discussed with Industry during these seminars.

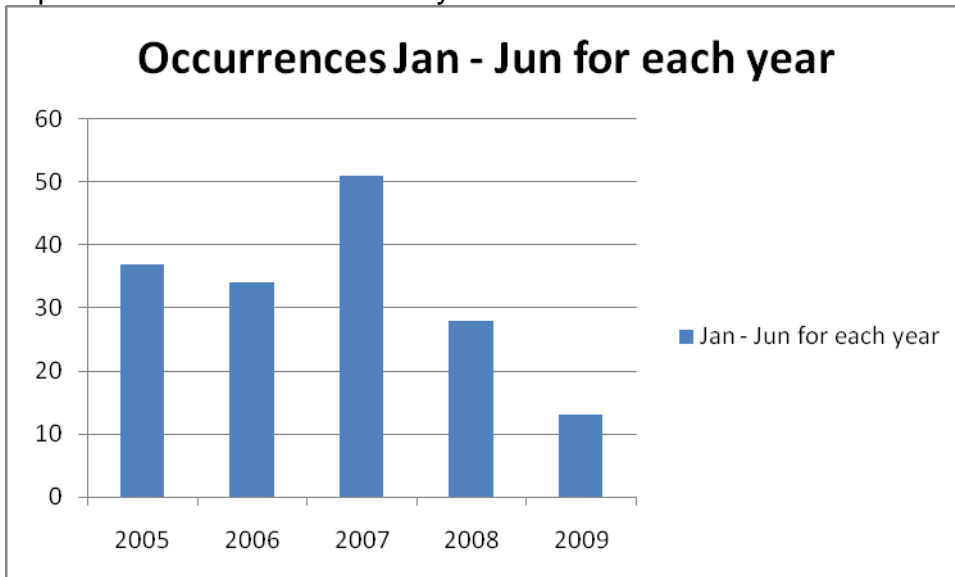
A formal audit programme is underway where all aircraft, operators and maintenance organisations are being inspected by the I.C.A.O team as a priority

and as a function of the DCA obligations to International Standards and Recommended Practices.

There are over 550 registered aircraft ranging from the smallest micro light to the largest airbus A 340 that are required to be inspected once a year. 40 maintenance organisations and 24 commercial operators also are inspected annually. A formal flight crew licensing audit program has been underway since shortly after the arrival of the ICAO team in December, 2008.

Whilst the DCA has recently recruited three additional Inspectors it is still seriously under resourced. New Inspectors are undergoing formal training courses as well as on the job training by the I.C.A.O team; this process normally takes at least two years of study and training.

The Ministry is once again urging all Operators to continue the implementation of internationally recognized standards and best practices to ensure continuing improvements in aviation safety in Namibia.



AN ACCIDENT: (in part) includes an occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft which takes place between the time any person boards an aircraft with the intention of flight until such time as all such persons have disembarked, in which a person is fatally or seriously injured or the aircraft sustains damage or structural failure which adversely affects its' structural strength, performance or flight characteristics.

AN INCIDENT: means an occurrence, other than an accident, associated with the operation of an aircraft which affects or could affect the safety of operation.

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PRO