



Inspectors may need to meet with the pilot or next-of-kin to learn about his/her background or to look at documentation that might be kept at home. This will never be easy for either side but the inspectors will always make telephone contact prior to visiting.

Such meetings allow the pilot or the next-of-kin to meet the inspectors personally and receive information on the conduct and progress of the investigation.

When the cause of an accident involving loss of life or serious injury is not initially apparent, there is often public speculation about what happened. This can be very confusing and distressing to next-of-kin or interested parties. In that regard, the AAIU will release a Preliminary Report within 30 days of the accident where loss of life or serious injury has occurred.

### INTERVIEWS

Inspectors will conduct interviews as soon as possible with those persons who were directly involved in the operation of the flight and anyone else who has information that may assist the investigation in determining the circumstances of the occurrence. Mindful of the stresses associated with being involved in an occurrence, Inspectors will conduct interviews with sensitivity and, if requested, will allow a support person to be present during the interview (provided they do not impede the interview). The initial interview is purely a fact gathering exercise in order to determine the direction and extent of the investigation. Follow-up interviews may have to be conducted with specific individuals during the course of the investigation.

### AAIU REPORT FORM (ARF)

Following an occurrence the flight crew will be required to complete an ARF, which will be provided by the AAIU. Furthermore, some investigations are conducted through correspondence alone, so the ARF assists the investigation in gathering factual information pertinent to the operation of the flight. The ARF is confidential to the investigation.

### THE REPORT

The AAIU aims to publish investigation reports as quickly as possible. However, it must be recognised that it takes time to complete a thorough investigation and to produce a report that will advance safety and meet the expectations of the public and the aviation industry as a whole. The report will protect the anonymity of the persons involved in the occurrence. Initially, a Draft Report is prepared and sent to interested parties and to those persons or organisations whose reputations may be adversely affected by the Draft Report. Parties will be allowed 28 days (National) and 60 days (International) to comment on the Draft Report and such comments will be considered by the investigation.

Having considered all comments received the Report is finalised and sent again to all interested parties as a Final Report, followed seven days later by publication on the AAIU web site.

### SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

If during the course of an investigation, safety deficiencies are identified, the AAIU will issue, 'Interim Safety Recommendations'. Further Safety Recommendations may be issued in the Final Report. Safety Recommendations are based on the findings of the investigation, and may address deficiencies that do not pertain directly to what is ultimately determined to be the cause of the occurrence. A Safety Recommendation shall in no case create a presumption of blame or liability for an occurrence.

### FURTHER QUESTIONS?

If you require any further information on the AAIU, please refer to our Web Site: [www.aaiu.ie](http://www.aaiu.ie) or contact the AAIU at:



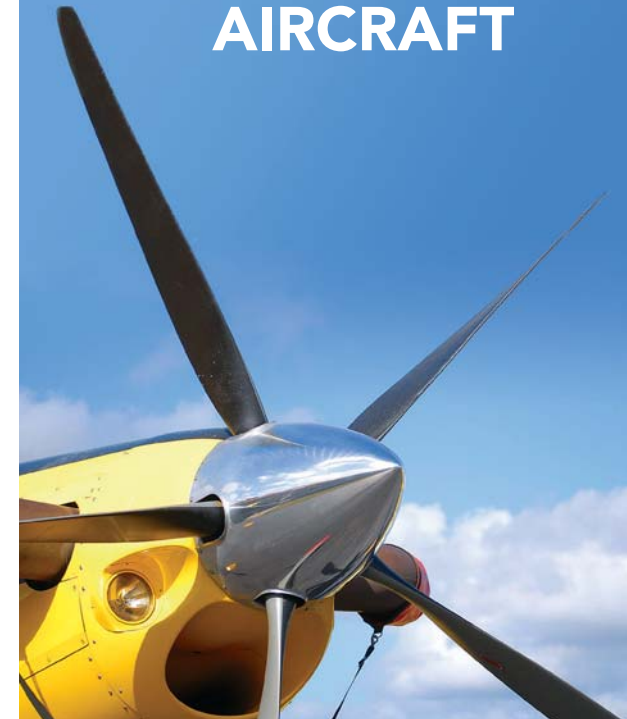
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## Air Accident Investigation Unit Ireland

# THE INVESTIGATION OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS AND SERIOUS INCIDENTS INVOLVING GENERAL AVIATION AIRCRAFT





## THE AIR ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION UNIT

The Air Accident Investigation Unit (AAIU) is an independent part of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and is responsible for the investigation of civil aviation accidents and serious incidents that occur in or over Ireland. In addition, the AAIU supports foreign states that carry out investigations into Irish registered aircraft abroad.

The AAIU conducts its investigations in accordance with Annex 13 to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Convention, Regulation (EU) No 996/2010 and Statutory Instrument No. 460 of 2009. The fundamental purpose of such investigations is to determine the circumstances and causes of these events, with a view to the preservation of life and the avoidance of similar occurrences in the future. It is not the purpose of such investigations to apportion blame or liability.

The AAIU operates a 24 hr/365-day 'On-Call' roster, in order to respond promptly and efficiently to the notification of an aviation occurrence.

## NOTIFICATION OF AN ACCIDENT OR SERIOUS INCIDENT

The legal responsibility for notification of an accident or serious incident rests firstly with the Pilot of the aircraft or, if he/she is fatally injured or incapacitated, then with the owner. However, any person may report an occurrence to the AAIU.

If the occurrence happens on or adjacent to an airfield/ aerodrome, then the airfield owner or aerodrome authority is also required to notify the AAIU. Furthermore, an Garda Síochána will report any aviation occurrence to the AAIU, which has come to their notice.

## WHEN AN OCCURRENCE TAKES PLACE

On receipt of a notification of an occurrence the AAIU 'On-Call' Inspector will, in conjunction with the Chief Inspector, assess the need to initiate an investigation and determine the level of response required.

In the event of an AAIU response, the Chief Inspector will appoint an Investigator-in-Charge (IIC) and will dispatch

a 'Go-Team' to the occurrence site. The IIC leads the investigation team, which is normally made up of an Operations Inspector and an Engineering Inspector. The level of response and composition of the 'Go-Team' is commensurate with the circumstances and scale of the occurrence to be investigated.

International Convention requires that the State of Occurrence shall forward a notification of an accident or serious incident to the State of Registry, State of the Operator, State of Design, State of Manufacture and ICAO (when the aircraft is over 2,250 kg or is a turbojet powered aeroplane). These states are entitled (on request) to appoint accredited representatives (ACCREPS) to participate in the investigation. The ACCREPS may be accompanied by Advisors and Experts. ACCREPS remain under the control of the IIC and are bound by the confidentiality of the investigation.

Where an occurrence happens to an Irish registered aircraft abroad, it is normal for the State of Occurrence to conduct the investigation. The AAIU, as the State of Registry, nominates an ACCREP who assists the foreign state with their investigation. In certain circumstances, the foreign state may delegate the investigation back to the State of Registry, in which case the investigation is conducted by the AAIU.

## POWERS OF AN INSPECTOR OF AIR ACCIDENTS

Inspectors of Air Accidents have statutory powers to take statements from anyone involved, directly or indirectly, with the occurrence under investigation. They can remove and retain evidence such as wreckage, parts, recordings, manuals, documents and can have access to inspect any aircraft, site, or building for the purpose of the investigation. All Inspectors of Air Accidents carry a Ministerial warrant identifying their appointment.

## THE INVESTIGATION

An on-site field investigation is carried out as soon as practical. The occurrence site will normally be secured by An Garda Síochána or the airfield owner/aerodrome authority pending the arrival of the Investigation Team.

The aircraft or wreckage shall not be moved without the prior consent of the AAIU.

## Field Investigation Phase

The field phase can last from a few hours to several days depending on the severity of the event. During the field phase, Inspectors will amongst other things:

- Examine and record the occurrence site
- Collect pertinent information
- Recover evidence including recorders (if available)
- Interview witnesses
- Remove wreckage and/or specific items of wreckage for further examination

If the wreckage is recovered for examination, it will be transported to the AAIU wreckage facility in Gormanston, Co Meath and held securely for the duration of the investigation. The wreckage will be returned to the owner following publication of the Final Report.

Wreckage not required for examination is the responsibility of the owner, the owner's estate or the aircraft insurers. Personal effects not relevant to the investigation will be returned to the owners, where possible or to An Garda Síochána for safe custody.

## Post-field Investigation Phase

This phase of the investigation can take many months, depending on the scale and complexity of the occurrence. During the post-field phase, the investigation will, inter-alia:

- Examine all pertinent records and documentation
- Examine selected wreckage items and test selected components and systems
- Download, read and analyse any recorded information
- Create simulations and reconstruct the flight or event
- Review autopsy and toxicology reports
- Conduct further interviews