

You Are Your Own Safety Investigator

If you're involved in a serious incident – that is, one that was nearly an accident – you need to notify it to the CAA. That's just the first step in the process, as most cases will require an investigation report to the CAA within 90 days.

When and How to Notify

For a serious incident, notify the CAA 'as soon as practicable', following the same procedure as for an accident notification. The contact details are on page 23 of this issue, and the requirements for notification are detailed in rule 12.55.

Once you've done the initial notification and have had time to collect your thoughts, you then have 14 days to follow up with the details. The easiest way is to use the "Report Occurrences Online" link on the CAA web site, under "Quick Links".

Internal Investigation

Next comes the investigation, with a requirement (rule 12.59) to report the results to the CAA within 90 days of the occurrence. But who does it?

A certificated organisation will normally have at least one designated person, as well as documented processes, for incident investigation.

Some smaller organisations contract

an external investigator to perform this function, and this person may serve several other organisations in the same capacity.

If you're not part of a certificated organisation, you don't have to do an investigation after notifying your occurrence to the CAA.

External Investigations

Some serious incidents will be investigated by the CAA or the Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC). You will be contacted by one or the other if this is happening.

Even so, a certificated organisation still has to carry out its own internal investigation (rule 12.59). Where there is an external investigation, you will be able to work in conjunction with the investigator(s).

If TAIC is investigating, Section 14 of the TAIC Act applies, and in broad terms, this requires you to leave things 'as is', in the absence of their

specific permission.

Completed Reports

We are happy to say that we receive some very competently written and timely investigation reports, from both large and small organisations.

Often, though, the initial notification is not followed through with an investigation report, possibly due to resource constraints or a lack of knowledge of how to go about it.

Seeking Help

In this situation, you can find some useful guidance in Advisory Circular AC12-2 *Incident investigation*, and also in section 2.6 of AC00-4 *Safety Management Systems*. These are both available on the CAA web site.

Or you can email info@caa.govt.nz, and your request will be forwarded to the Safety Investigation Unit or the Intelligence, Risk and Safety Analysis Unit as appropriate. ■

The CAA gets over 5000 accident and incident reports per year, and the reporting rate is trending upwards. This is not necessarily a bad indication – more a reflection of an improving reporting culture.

Michael Campbell, Team Leader Safety Data Management, says that although this has not been researched in detail, the increase is probably due to a more widespread appreciation of safety management system principles.

"As a result some organisations may be reporting more events than before," says Mike. "Newly certificated Part 115 organisations have also started reporting, but their numbers are still quite small."

