



ECAC Training Task Force

Interview with Nina Smith

Head of Aviation Security Training and Human Factors, Civil Aviation Authority, United Kingdom, and Chair of the ECAC Training Task Force

The Training Task Force develops guidance material and best practices for Member States on training in aviation security, as well as best practices for the selection and assessment of security personnel. Nina Smith, who has been chairing the task force since November 2018, answers a few questions for ECAC News on some of the latest issues the group has been dealing with.

1. What is the Training Task Force?

The ECAC Training Task Force focuses on aspects of both training and human factors, with an aim to develop guidance and training materials in areas identified as useful to Member States and where regulatory or technical developments require further guidance.

In the field of aviation security, ECAC has a range of working groups that deal with issues mainly arising from the implementation of Part II of ECAC Doc 30, including the development of training-related materials for the ECAC Aviation Security Handbook. The Training Task Force works closely with other groups, including the Guidance Material and Technical task forces, to ensure that information and best practices are developed with the relevant subject matter expertise, are current and relevant.

The group meets three times a year, with work being continued 'virtually' between the meetings to progress the work programme. The work programme is defined for each year, based on priorities identified by Member States, in the ECAC Security Forum and through members of the group itself. The group benefits from the support of the ECAC Secretariat, assisting with administration and the smooth running of the meetings and work output.

2. What ethos underpins the group's work?

Training, whilst often not in spotlight, is a cornerstone of a competent and motivated workforce, fundamental for effective aviation security. One of the priority outcomes of ICAO's Global Aviation Security Plan (GASep) is to develop security culture and human capability, including the professionalisation of the workforce and ensuring continuous performance, and this principle is underpinned by an effective national approach to aviation security training at all levels.

3. What are the main achievements of the group in 2018-2019?

The work programme of the group was varied and covered the revision of a number of existing ECAC Aviation Security Handbook documents (through the group's continued drive to ensure the existing materials are regularly reviewed and updated), as well as a number of new documents.

Amongst the revised documents developed in 2019 was the update and combination of two existing documents on the theoretical and practical aspects of the motivation of screeners into a single document, conducted at the request of Member States. This is an area of human factors not often in the spotlight, but fundamentally important to ensuring our people can perform to the best of their ability and that their roles and working environments take into account the limitations and capabilities of individuals. By bringing the theoretical and practical aspects together in one document, it provides a more accessible resource for Member States.

One of the new documents developed by the task force was a model training syllabus for in-flight supplies, airport supplies and air carrier materials, using a newly developed 'table-style' reference format that can be used to develop a training course by following an established outline. The task force is always keen to hear feedback on the utilisation of the developed materials and in the case of a model syllabus, if Member States find the new format useful.



Participants attending the Training Task Force meeting in Paris, 19-20 September 2019

4. What topics is the task force currently focusing on?

The task force is currently completing its 2019 work programme and planning for 2020. The group has an existing work programme planned, which includes a complete review of training materials around screener certification, the development of a model programme/syllabus of training on security culture, and a joint task of working with the Guidance Material and Technical task forces on training guidance in the detection of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threats.

5. What area of work the group undertakes lies closest to your heart?

Earlier this year the group revised an existing document on the quality control of training – this area is a particular passion of mine. With the world of aviation moving towards embracing security management systems (SeMS), I strongly believe that applying robust quality assurance/control principles to aviation security training is vital, as well as empowering training providers, instructors and appropriate authorities to have a national framework in place that ensures internal quality assurance and an appropriate level of oversight.

6. What challenges do you see arising in the future?

One particular area that has remained a focus of the group is keeping abreast of the ever-changing technical advances and ensuring that training materials developed are current, relevant and reflect the advancing technical requirements.

One area that has been a particular focus of the group is around the move to 3D-based screening equipment. In 2018 the group produced a guidance document focused on the challenges of training 3D-based screening, particularly for screeners transitioning from existing 2D equipment. For 2020 the group will be revisiting this area through the development of a training outline that can be used for the training of screeners using 3D equipment.

Final word

The Training Task Force would like to encourage Member States to consider participating in the group's work actively – our doors are always open to new experts from Member States. The broader the membership of our group the more reflective our work can be of the varying needs of Member States – and the group is also an excellent exchange of training best practice and ideas. ■

Nina Smith is currently the head of the training team within the Aviation Security Department at the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority, responsible for the regulation and quality assurance of AVSEC training in the United Kingdom, as well as all internal training for national auditors and other AVSEC staff. Prior to her current role, she spent seven years working as a United Kingdom national aviation security auditor and senior regulation advisor. She is also the chair of the ECAC Training Task Force.