



UNSMS

Security Management Operations Manual

Chapter XIX

**GUIDANCE ON COMMERCIAL
AIR TRAVEL SAFETY**

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A. Introduction

1. United Nations Security Management System¹ (UNSMS) personnel serve in some of the most challenging environments in the world, often working in difficult conditions while conducting their duties under the mandates, programmes, and activities of their respective organizations.
2. Commercial air travel is often the most practical means to reach operational areas, particularly in challenging environments.

B. Purpose

3. This Guidance provides a framework to meet the following objectives:
 - a. To ensure system-wide consistency in the provision of information and advice in the form of recommendations on commercial aviation safety to UNSMS organizations, and
 - b. To enable UNSMS organizations to optimize safety considerations in commercial air travel.

C. Scope

4. This Guidance governs the dissemination of aviation safety information and advice in the form of recommendations to UNSMS organizations, relating to the use of commercial air operators and commercially operated donated flights for official travel.

D. Exclusion

5. Issues relating to chartered flights or air transport services procured, designed, and operated for specific purposes (e.g. CASEVAC/MEDEVAC), issues relating to aviation security² as well as issues relating to non-commercially operated donated flights are outside the scope and are not governed by this Guidance.

¹ The UNSMS comprises all United Nations system organizations (major organizational units of the Secretariat which have heads officially accountable to the Secretary-General, other bodies subsidiary or related to the United Nations, such as the United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes) and other international organizations that have signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations for the purposes of security.

² The UNSMS distinguishes between security and safety as follows: Security relates to undesirable events caused deliberately by motivated human antagonist(s). Safety relates to undesirable events that are not caused deliberately (e.g., acts of nature or accidents). See the *Security Risk Management Manual*, p.6. Further, ICAO defines “aviation security” as “human and material resources used to safeguard civil aviation against unlawful interference.”

E. Applicability

6. This Guidance is applicable to all UNSMS organizations³.

F. Definitions

7. Commercial Air Operator – An operator, with a valid Air Operator Certificate issued by the State of the operator, which, for remuneration or hire, provides scheduled or non-scheduled⁴ air transport services to the public for the carriage of passengers.
8. Chartered Flights – Air transport procured under contractual arrangement between an air operator and a UNSMS organization.
9. Commercially Operated Donated Flight – Gratis air transport provided to one or more UNSMS organizations for official travel, operated by a Commercial Air Operator. It does not include air transport operated by any government or military entity of a Member State, or any other transport that is not operated by a commercial air operator.

G. Guiding Principle

10. The safety of UNSMS personnel is paramount and as such, advice in the form of recommendations is based solely on safety considerations.

H. Provision of Information and Recommendations

11. The process for the provision of air operator safety information and advice in the form of recommendations regarding commercial air operators and commercially operated donated flights includes the following:
 - a. UNDSS collects and collates relevant information from specialized industry sources.
 - b. UNDSS analyses the information and establishes a list of commercial air operators that are recommended for official travel of personnel within the UNSMS (“the list”).
 - c. Through the United Nations Security Managers Information Network (UNSMIN), UNDSS communicates the list to the most senior security professional advising the Designated Official (DO) in the field and to the air travel safety focal point(s) nominated by UNSMS organizations (see 12.a).
 - d. UNSMS organizations may share the list with contractors bound by the United Nations General Conditions of Contracts for the Provision of Goods and Services on an “as needed” basis, and subject to any other confidentiality requirements recommended by the Office of Legal Affairs.

³ The Guidance is applicable to all UNSMS entities and their personnel (herein, “personnel”), as defined in *Security Policy Manual*, Chapter III, “Applicability of the United Nations Security Management System.”

⁴ Non-scheduled, on-demand air transport excluding charter, commonly referred to as air taxis.

- e. UNSMS organizations take into account the list in making decisions relating to the use of Commercial Air Operators for the official travel of its personnel and give preference to the use of Commercial Air Operators included in the list when and where available.
- f. UNSMS organizations may request UNDSS to conduct a review of a commercial air operator that is not on the list or to provide additional information on the reason for exclusion from the list.

I. Roles and Responsibilities

12. UNSMS organization:

- a. Provides UNDSS with the name(s) and contact details of the air travel safety focal point(s) to act as liaison with UNDSS.
- b. Guided by the information provided by UNDSS, determines which commercial air operators and commercially operated donated flights to use for official travel of its personnel.
- c. Reports to UNDSS any aviation safety concerns relating to commercial air operators through their respective air travel safety focal points.

13. DO:

- a. In emergency situations only (such as CASEVAC/MEDEVAC, evacuation and relocation for safety or security purposes), the DO can approve the use of any commercial air operator or commercially operated donated flight. Whenever practicable, such approval is taken in consultation with the Representatives of UNSMS organizations in-country or their designate(s).

14. UNDSS:

- a. Provides safety information and advice in the form of recommendations regarding the use of commercial air operators to UNSMS organizations.
- b. Upon request, conducts a review of a commercial air operator that is not on the list or provides additional information on the reason for exclusion from the list.
- c. Serves as a central repository of commercial air operator safety information for the UNSMS.
- d. Maintains safety data on commercial air operators.
- e. Ensures coordination with the Aviation Technical Advisory Group (ATAG) for system-wide consistency in the provision of aviation safety advice.

J. Confidentiality

15. Information and analysis generated by UNDSS in relation to aviation safety is intended for UNSMS use only and is confidential. Such information may be shared with third parties on a need-to-know basis and provided suitable mechanisms are in place to maintain confidentiality.

K. Final Provisions

16. This Guidance should be disseminated to all relevant stakeholders.
17. This Guidance supersedes *Security Policy Manual*, Chapter VII, Section A: “Commercial Air Travel Policy” (dated 23 January 2019), which is hereby abolished.