



Operations Advice Notice

No. 03/2023

Accidents and Incidents

1. Introduction

This Operations Advice Notice provides guidance on the following:

- Definitions of accidents and incidents
- Accident or incident notification
- Accident and incident investigation
- Post Traumatic Stress disorder.

2. Definitions

accident means an investigable matter involving an aircraft where:

- (a) a person dies or suffers serious injury as a result of an occurrence associated with the operation of the aircraft; or
- (b) the aircraft is destroyed or seriously damaged as a result of an occurrence associated with the operation of the aircraft; or
- (c) any property is destroyed or seriously damaged as a result of an occurrence associated with the operation of the aircraft.

accident site means any of the following sites associated with an accident:

- (a) a site containing the aircraft or any of its wreckage;
- (b) a site where there is an impact point associated with the accident;
- (c) if the accident involved destruction or serious damage to property (other than the aircraft)—a site containing that property or any of its wreckage;

together with such area around the site as the Chief Commissioner determines to be reasonably necessary to facilitate the investigation of the accident and securing the site.

aircraft means any machine or craft used in air navigation, however propelled or moved.

aircraft system means a part of an aircraft that consists of an integral network of related and inter-controlled devices designed to perform a specific function. Examples: An aircraft's flight

management system, hydraulic system, electrical system, flight guidance system and navigation system.

airprox means an occurrence in which 2 or more aircraft come into such close proximity that a threat to the safety of the aircraft exists or may exist, in airspace where the aircraft are not subject to an air traffic separation standard or where separation is a pilot responsibility.

coroner means the head of the relevant State or Territory coronial jurisdiction, or a person directed by that head to conduct a coronial inquiry.

flight crew member means a crew member who has duties essential to the flight management of an aircraft.

fuel exhaustion, in relation to an aircraft, means the aircraft has exhausted its useable fuel.

fuel starvation, in relation to an aircraft, means an interruption to the fuel supply to the aircraft's engines, although there is useable fuel on board the aircraft.

immediately reportable matter means a serious safety matter that covers occurrences such as accidents involving death, serious injury, destruction of, or serious damage to aircraft or property or when an accident nearly occurred. Immediately reportable matters must be reported to a nominated official by a responsible person as soon as is reasonably practical. The list of immediately reportable matters is contained in the [TSI Regulations](#) at Section 2.3.

near-collision, in relation to an aircraft, means an occurrence in which the aircraft was required to manoeuvre to avoid a collision with another aircraft, or where an avoidance manoeuvre would have been appropriate.

reportable matter means an immediately reportable matter or a routine reportable matter.

responsible person, the following persons are responsible persons in relation to reportable matters:

- (a) a flight crew member of the aircraft concerned;
- (b) the owner or operator of the aircraft;
- (c) a person performing an air traffic control service in relation to the aircraft;
- (d) a person performing a dedicated aerodrome rescue or firefighting service in relation to the aircraft;
- (e) a person who is a licenced aircraft maintenance engineer or a person authorised by GFA to conduct work in relation to the aircraft;
- (f) a member of the ground handling crew in relation to the aircraft;
- (g) a member of the staff of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority;
- (h) the operator of an aerodrome;
- (i) the Club CFI/Operations Manager or Competition Safety Officer.

routine reportable matter means a matter that has not had a serious outcome and does not require an immediate report, but safety was affected or could have been affected. Under section 19 of the [TSI Act](#) a responsible person who has knowledge of a routine reportable matter must report it within 72 hours with a written report to a nominated official. The list of routine reportable matters is contained in the [TSI Regulations](#). Routine reportable matters include a non-serious injury or the aircraft suffering minor damage or structural failure that does not significantly affect the structural integrity, performance or flight characteristics of the aircraft and does not require major repair or replacement of the affected components.

runway incursion means any intrusion of an aircraft, vehicle, person, animal or object on the ground within a runway strip or helicopter landing site that creates a collision hazard or results in a reduction of safety for aircraft.

serious damage, in relation to an aircraft, means:

- (a) damage that:
 - (i) significantly affects the structural integrity, performance or operational characteristics of the aircraft; and
 - (ii) requires major repair or replacement of the affected component or components of the aircraft; or
- (b) destruction of the aircraft.

serious injury means an injury that requires, or would usually require, admission to hospital within 7 days after the day when the injury is suffered.

violation of controlled airspace means unauthorised entry of an aircraft into airspace for which clearance is required, or to which entry is prohibited.

3. ACCIDENT OR INCIDENT NOTIFICATION

3.1. Notification to ATSB

Accidents and serious incidents (commonly called Immediately Reportable Matters), which affect the safety of aircraft must, in the first instance, be notified to the ATSB by telephone toll-free call: **1800 011 034** or (02) 6230 4470.

3.2. Notification to GFA

GFA has an obligation to examine the results of incident and accident investigations to ensure that standards have been complied with and are appropriate. Therefore, in addition to the above statutory requirement, it is a GFA requirement that 'Immediately Reportable Matters' and 'Routine Reportable Matters' are also reported to the EM/O at the time of reporting to the ATSB or immediately thereafter. The [telephone contact details for the EM/O](#) can be found on the GFA website. The EM/O will notify the appropriate GFA officers and the RM/O of the relevant Region.

The GFA also requires notification to the Executive Manager, Operations (EM/O) of any other incidents that are not required to be reported to ATSB. If you are unsure whether an occurrence should be reported, then it probably should be!

3.3. Who Must Report an Aviation Accident?

A responsible person (usually the owner, operator or crew of the aircraft) must report an Immediately Reportable Matter to the ATSB and GFA without delay. However, sometimes the owner and/or operator may not learn of the accident until sometime after the event. The crew may also be unable to notify the ATSB or GFA due to personal injuries. Therefore, anyone learning of an aviation accident should report the accident to the ATSB and GFA immediately they become aware, as well as alerting emergency services as required.

3.4. Confidential Reporting System

Personal information about the reporter and any person referred to in a report is confidential. Even if you are not concerned about keeping your identity confidential, do not copy in personnel

from within or outside your organisation to the report. The integrity of the confidentiality of the reporter is the main concern of the GFA SOAR system.

If you think it's necessary to act on information about a person referred to in your report, you should report this directly to the Executive Manager, Operations by email emo@glidingaustralia.org.

GFA does not accept anonymous reports. GFA investigators cannot contact an anonymous reporter to verify the report or to seek additional information, and a person (or organisation) whom allegations are made against may be unable to respond properly and fairly. Further, GFA investigators must be satisfied that the reporter's motivation for reporting is safety promotion, and that the reporter is not attempting to damage a rival or pursue an industrial agenda behind anonymity.

3.5. Online Reporting

A secure [Safety Occurrence Reporting Portal](#) is to be used to notify the GFA about all aviation safety occurrences. This system automatically advises the ATSB, thereby ensuring our statutory obligations are met. Reports will also be automatically copied to the Regional Managers Operations (RM/O) and the pilot's Chief Flying Instructor (CFI).

3.6. Offline Reporting

In those circumstances where access to the GFA's Safety Occurrence Reporting portal is impracticable, members can use a hard copy paper form which can be downloaded from the GFA [documents library](#) and sent to the [GFA office](#) for entry into the Safety Occurrence Reporting portal.

3.7. Further Information

Occurrence Type	Reporter	Reporting Requirements
Immediately Reportable Matter	Responsible person	Immediate notification by telephone to (a) ATSB (b) GFA Complete and submit to the ATSB and GFA an Occurrence report using the GFA's online Safety Occurrence Reporting Portal or hard copy paper form.
Routine Reportable Matter	Responsible person	Within 72 hours, complete and submit to the ATSB and GFA an Occurrence report using the GFA's online Safety Occurrence Reporting Portal or hard copy paper form.
Other	Responsible person	Complete and submit and submit to GFA an Occurrence report using the GFA's online Safety Occurrence Reporting Portal or hard copy paper form

Written notifications should contain as much information about the accident, serious incident or incident as is within the knowledge of the person at the time of submitting the notification.

Submission of information known by the reporter to be false or misleading is a serious offence under section 137.1 of the [Criminal Code](#). Aiding, abetting, counselling, procuring or urging the submission of false or misleading information is also a serious offence.

4. ACCIDENT & INCIDENT INVESTIGATION

The ATSB will not investigate every transport safety matter reported to it. The ATSB follows a policy of selective investigation, which is similar to that of many equivalent organisations overseas. Selective investigation concentrates the ATSB's resources on investigations most likely to enhance transport safety. Further, not all transport safety matters are required to be reported to the ATSB. The ATSB will inform the Gliding Federation of Australia and the police whether they will investigate an immediately reportable matter.

4.1. Coordinating with Police Inquiries

In the case of fatal accidents or those occasioning serious injury, the local Police will coordinate the investigation. The Police may wish to utilise the expertise of the GFA to assist their investigation. The GFA contacts are the EM/O, the Chairman of the GFA Operations Panel (COP), and the local RM/O. Contact details are available from the [GFA website](#).

4.2. Coordinating with GFA Investigation

Accidents and incidents that are not subject to an ATSB or Police investigation will be investigated by the GFA. The EM/O has the authority to conduct an investigation into any accident or incident on behalf of the GFA, either personally or by delegating the role of investigator to a suitable person. In most cases, the EM/O will delegate the role of investigator to the local CFI or Competition Safety Officer. Clubs and members must provide their full co-operation to the GFA's investigator.

4.3. Protection of Aircraft Wreckage

It is understood that police and emergency services personnel need to take immediate action when arriving at the scene. However, it is important that wreckage, ground scars and the accident site are disturbed as little as possible. This will ensure that investigators are able to determine the factors that contributed to the accident.

4.4. GFA Access to the Wreckage and Relevant Material

Subject to ATSB/Police consent (where necessary), the GFA's investigator shall have unhampered access to the wreckage and all relevant material, including flight and visual recording devices, and shall have unrestricted control over it to ensure that a detailed examination can be made without delay by authorised personnel participating in the investigation.

4.5. Removal of Aircraft Wreckage

When an immediately reportable accident occurs, the aircraft is deemed to have come into the custody of the Executive Director of Transport Safety Investigation, and it must not be moved except with the permission of the Executive Director or authorised representative. Where the ATSB has informed the GFA that it is not investigating, Police authority will be required to remove the wreckage.

4.6. Dealing with the Media

The media have a job to do and deserve access to certain information in order to do that job. However, for their own safety they must remain outside the secured area. Names of casualties are not to be given to the news media. This information will be released by the appropriate authorities, and this will happen only after next of kin have been informed. Investigators will not provide access to the media to photograph survivors or deceased persons. Care should be exercised in the use of mobile telephones or radios to discuss the accident or the personnel involved as the media may be capable of monitoring communications frequencies.

5. POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

This may occur not only in-flight crew associated with the Accident/Incident, but witnesses, relatives, friends, club members and accident investigators. It has been noted that Clubs have been deeply affected after such occurrences, in some cases straining the viability of the organisation. The following resources are listed for the information of Clubs, Instructors and members wishing to find out more about PTSD as part of their risk management:

- [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder](#)
- [Coping with a critical incident](#)

Support for Clubs and members affected by PTSD can be found at the [Lifeline website](#).



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3 July 2023