



# United States Department of the Interior

National Business Center

Aviation Management

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## **DOI AM OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES MEMORANDUM NO. 04-33**

Subject: Aviation Program Evaluation

Effective Date: January 1, 2004

Supersedes: OPM 03-33 dated January 1, 2003

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**1. Purpose.** This OPM establishes policy and procedures for the oversight, conduct, tracking and associated management of aviation program evaluations.

**2. Authority.** The Associate Director, Department of the Interior, Aviation Management (DOI AM), establishes this policy in accordance with provisions of Department Manual 352 DM 1 *Aviation Safety Program*, and Secretarial Order 3250 dated September 30, 2003.

The Federal Managers Financial Integrity Act (P.L. 97-255) establishes specific requirements for agency heads to establish management controls safeguarding against waste, fraud and mismanagement. Office of Management and Budget Circular A-123 prescribes appropriate management controls as an integral part of the cycle of planning, budget, management and auditing. Federal Property Management Regulation (41-CFR 101.37) establishes Federal aviation management practices including evaluation, review and reporting on aspects of aviation programs. The Interagency Committee for Aviation Policy (ICAP) agreement of January 2000 establishes common aviation safety standards and guidelines that prescribe program evaluations for all federal executive department agencies.

**3. Introduction.** Program evaluation is a systematic process for analyzing and reporting information with regard to the aviation programs at all levels of the Department of the Interior. It is an essential means of providing feedback about the operations, process, and outcomes with a focus on program enhancement. This quality assurance system assesses the safety of aviation services provided, assures efficiency in management of complex resources, and provides a means for sharing best practices.

**4. Policy.** Bureau managers are responsible for aviation program performance and are responsible for established standards. Programs will be evaluated to assess processes commensurate with controlling costs, with mitigating adverse aspects of aviation operations, and to evaluate their outcomes. Follow-up contacts will occur on one-year intervals following the evaluation to document program enhancements.

Interior's aviation program evaluations will be conducted in each of the Bureau's geographic units (region, state, area, etc.) that use aviation resources. Evaluations should occur on an interval of approximately every five years.

**Goals-** Department level Aviation Program Evaluation goals are that:

- Evaluations will be conducted in a manner that is objective and independent of internal Bureau inspections, audits, and controls while minimizing the duplication of efforts.
- Reliable and timely information is obtained, maintained, reported, and used for decision-making.
- Management and program deficiencies are recognized and corrective actions are promptly recommended.
- Findings and recommendations are monitored for corrective action and Bureaus are encouraged to pursue program enhancements.
- Best practices are identified and shared with all aviation programs through the evaluation/oversight process.

## **5. Responsibility.**

A. Department of the Interior, Aviation Management (DOI AM). The Associate Director, DOI AM, shall establish evaluation criteria for and provide leadership in the conduct of aviation program management and aviation safety program evaluations within the Department (352 DM 1.6A). It is the responsibility of the Aviation Program Evaluation Manager (EM) to develop and maintain an independent assessment program commensurate with Departmental policy, goals and objectives. The DOI AM Chief, Division of Financial Management is responsible for financial audits and fiscal controls that are separate from program evaluations.

B. Bureau. Bureau Aviation Managers (BAM) are responsible for coordination with the DOI AM for the conduct of timely program evaluations, facilitating program enhancements, and follow-up.

C. Managers. Managers at all levels in the DOI AM and in the Bureaus have the responsibility for implementing prescribed management controls, participating in and/or supporting evaluations of their program, and for leading efforts toward aviation program enhancement.

## **6. Evaluation Process.**

A. Planning. Internal or external sources may be used to evaluate Department programs, or as resources for gathering and analyzing information. External sources may include the Inspector General (IG) office, Government Accounting Office (GAO), the Interagency Committee for Aviation Policy Aviation Resources Management Survey (ICAP-ARMS), other Federal agencies, or contract resources. Internal sources of information may include readiness evaluations, site surveys, and Bureau program reviews.

B. General. The following procedure will be followed in planning, conducting, reporting, and monitoring phases of the program evaluation system.

The EM will coordinate with the BAM and the DOI AM Area Director (AD) on team membership and itinerary. The EM will maintain the final decision on team composition.

Internal team composition should include at a minimum, the EM (lead), the BAM, and the AD, or their respective designated alternate. The EM will coordinate external team composition and/or support services.

DOI AM may fund the team's transportation while in the field. The Bureau is responsible for coordinating transportation requirements with the EM. Team members/advisors are responsible for the cost of their transportation from their home office to the site of the management briefing and return home.

Official correspondence and reports will be originated by the EM and routed from the DOI AM Associate Director, through the Bureau Director.

C. Program Scope and Outcomes. The EM will collect data representing the last 5 years accident/incident occurrence, SAFECOM participation, aircraft use in hours and dollars, and other data found to be relevant to program performance and outcomes.

The BAM is responsible for dissemination of questionnaires to each unit being visited by the team. The Bureau is responsible for the written response to the background survey for the official report.

The Bureau should provide copies of reports from internal evaluations or similar studies for the team to review prior to its field visit. The team may review field unit aviation plans and/or safety plans when available.

D. Conduct. Bureau line managers (and staff) may be briefed at their discretion, in person or by telephone, prior to start and/or after completion of the field evaluation. The EM will brief the DOI AM Associate Director in closing.

The team should visit aviation support facilities (helibase, airport, retardant base, dispatch center) as time permits. This may include cooperating or interagency facilities. General areas of assessment will include the following:

(1) Administration. Quality controls and outcomes may be assessed in the following categories;

- **Management and Organization:** Evaluate the effectiveness of management practices, internal guidance processes, controls, and organization structure.
- **Needs Assessment:** Address aviation resources being used, or immediately available to a program to assess efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Economic Evaluation:** Questions the costs and outcomes of program expenditures. This may consider cost comparisons among the available procurement alternatives (in-house, contract, rental, relative to the A-76).

- **Customer Satisfaction:** Provide feedback about the extent to which the services rendered have met expectations.

(2) **Operations.** Assess whether operations are functioning as intended by the managing discipline. Evaluate procedures used for compliance with FAR's and DM's. This may be conducted as a short-term response to safety concerns, as an operational risk assessment, or to review procedural issues of immediate concern.

(3) **Safety.** Analyze Bureau accident prevention activities, accident history, and participation in the DOI Aviation Mishap Information System. Identify trends in the program that may precipitate mishaps.

(4) **Training.** Determine the level of participation in aviation management and safety training for initial competency and for maintenance of skills.

E. **Findings and Recommendations.** Findings will be accompanied by recommendations for enhancement with suggested assignments to Bureau or DOI AM offices. The Bureau office is responsible for facilitating personnel assignments and specific due dates for corrective actions.

Team findings and recommendations will be provided in writing. The final report will include worksheets to be completed at the appropriate Bureau/DOI AM level for workload assignments and due dates.

The EM will coordinate with the BAM to track recommendations and target dates for follow-up in each geographic area evaluation process. The EM will document enhancements that are accomplished in the Department programs.

**7. Recognizing and Reporting Deficiencies.** Commensurate with the requirement of OMB Circular A-123 the Department is required to report material weaknesses in management controls. The DOI Management Control Program prescribes a system for Bureaus to identify and report material weaknesses found in management controls. The DOI AM and Bureaus will facilitate the reporting of material weaknesses in aviation management practices, commensurate with the direction established in the referenced program.

A. **Definitions.**

1) **Program Deficiency** is an issue that may identify any concern related to the safe, effective, and efficient operation of an aviation program such as:

a) An item which is contrary to the appropriate established requirements of the Departmental Manual (DM), Operational Procedures Memorandums (OPMs), Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) or interagency agreements:

b) An item that compromises safety, risk management or accident prevention:

c) An item that unnecessarily hampers or delays the accomplishment of the assigned mission or causes an unjustified increased cost to the Government:

d) An item contributing to the waste, fraud, or mismanagement of aviation funds, programs, or resources.

2) Material Weakness is an unresolved program deficiency that:

(a) Has been reviewed by the Aviation Board of Directors:

(b) Is substantially and/or essentially below the standard established by the Department or in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR):

(c) Has not been corrected within a reasonable amount of time and effort:

**- AND -**

(d) Is subsequently designated by the DOI AM Associate Director as a problem significant enough to report outside the agency.

The designation of material weakness requires a judgment by senior management as to the relative risk and significance of deficiencies to the Department. Reporting outside the agency is only recommended after a reasonable period of time has elapsed and all available resources have been exhausted in the attempt to correct the deficiency.

B. Reporting Deficiencies. Bureau managers and employees should identify deficiencies and enhancements as a result of their operational management controls. Safety deficiencies may also be reported to the Aviation Mishap Information System via a safety communiqué (SAFECOM). A program deficiency observed during the course of an aviation program evaluation will generally be reported if it is, or should be, of interest to the next level of management. Less significant and site specific operational concerns may also be reported for the Bureau's internal use, but will not require further reporting or tracking.

**8. Program Enhancements**. Bureau managers are responsible for taking timely and effective action to implement recommended enhancements. One year from the time of notification is considered sufficient time to resolve issues that do not require "out-year" fiscal planning and approval. In comparison, management must make a decision regarding IG audit recommendations within a six-month period and implementation of IG recommendations should be completed within one year to the extent practicable.

A determination should be made when sufficient corrective actions have been taken and desired results have been achieved. The DOI AM Aviation Program Evaluation Manager should be notified when a program enhancement effort comes to closure.

*/s/ Michael A. Martin*  
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Associate Director