

Get Those Hours and Flights In...

If the CAA doesn't get accurate flying hours data, it can overestimate the accident rate in a particular sector. That means more attention from auditors, more spot checks, and possibly unneeded regulation. That's why the Intelligence, Safety and Risk Analysis (ISRA) unit is going to great lengths to contact participants to get that information.

CAA's ISRA unit members have been hitting the phones trying to reach every last owner of an aircraft with Standard or Restricted certificates of airworthiness, to encourage them to submit their hours and flights.

The team is also contacting operators of parachutes and aircraft used on Part 115 operations.

Unit team leader, Mike Campbell, says 1400 emails have been sent out, and when those have bounced back, the participants have been getting a phone call. Anyone who doesn't have a working email address has been sent a letter.

"Submitting flights and hours to the CAA is actually a legal requirement (rule 12.151), but many people do not realise that, or can't be bothered, or try to avoid it.

"We're blitzing the aviation community to get as many replies as we can.

"In the end, getting a better response means better data and better decisions by the CAA about how it can help industry."

ISRA manager, Jack Stanton, says the CAA focuses its efforts on the highest-risk areas of aviation.

"To assess the risk in a particular sector, we need to know the accident rate, so we use the number of accidents per 100,000 hours flown. We know, pretty accurately, the number of accidents in any area, but if the number of flying hours reported from that area is lower than it really is, that sector will appear to be higher-risk than it should.

"For example, the returns we've received, plus an estimate of those not received, indicates that private flying hours have decreased 31 per cent since 2008.

"We need to know whether that is genuine, or the result of under-reporting."

The aggregated information is also passed to the Ministry of Transport and Statistics New Zealand, where it is available to the public and Government, and influences decisions about investment and infrastructure.

Each participant is being mailed, or emailed, Form CAA605a or Form CAA605b to complete. Those forms can be emailed back to stats@caa.govt.nz; or posted to Safety Data Analyst, Civil Aviation Authority, PO Box 3555, Wellington 6410.

All that is required from private owners is their annual total hours flown, divided into 'Private' and 'Test/Ferry'. An appropriate form is included in the email to private owners, although they can also just email the figures to stats@caa.govt.nz.

Mike Campbell says an incidental benefit of the 'blitz' is the updating of the contacts list.

"It has been an interesting exercise – we've corrected more than a hundred email addresses, and some phone numbers and physical addresses as well.

"Many participants have had a bit of a yarn about their aviation interests, and we've passed on some suggestions about the CAA's operations to the appropriate sections too!" ■



Photo: istockphoto.com/mirexgn