

Safety Recommendation Number:	IRLD2021032
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Safety Recommendation Status:	In process of implementation

Safety Recommendation:

The Minister for Transport should institute a detailed review of the IAA's regulatory and oversight mechanisms to ensure that they are sufficiently robust and comprehensive, and that interfaces and delineation of responsibilities are clearly defined and understood by the IAA and the entities it regulates.

Response:

On 01 February 2022, and in subsequent engagement with the AAIU, the Department of Transport provided the following response to this Safety Recommendation:

"On behalf of the Minister I would like to convey the following:

This recommendation is accepted.

A focused review of the Irish Aviation Authority's (IAA) role as national civil aviation regulator was completed in 2021. The IAA is subject to the ongoing international aviation safety audit framework of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the International Civil Aviation Organisation. The IAA is also subject to periodic review by the Department of Transport as provided for by section 32 of the Irish Aviation Authority Act 1993, the most recent one was carried out in 2019. In order not to duplicate the work of EASA, the independent review, carried out by Bureau Veritas, focused on areas of regulation that are outside the EU regulatory framework.

The scope of the review covered the full range of activities in respect of aircraft operations, airworthiness, licensing, aerodromes and air navigation services.

The report of the review is published on the Department of Transport's website: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2598f-publication-of-report-of-review-of-the-iaa> / Aviation safety regulation is underpinned by a principle of continuous improvement and a number of recommendations for improvement emerged from the review. The IAA has an action plan in place to address these recommendations with a view to closing the recommendations in 2022. The Department will monitor implementation of the recommendations.

The focused review of Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) completed in 2021 provided a snapshot in time of the IAA's role as the national civil aviation regulator in areas of national competency that are outside the EU regulatory framework.

While acknowledging the review was performed remotely due to Covid-19 pandemic travel restrictions, the depth of the review was considered sufficient by Bureau Veritas to establish that the IAA has a good understanding of what it regulates, has an appropriate organisation structure with competent staff and that the safety oversight system and the regulation activity of the IAA are robust.

The Department is mindful that the review was carried out during a period when aviation activities globally and nationally were reduced and when there were a number of public health restrictions in place that may have impacted on the work of the IAA. Therefore, a similar review will be carried out to include engagement with entities regulated by the IAA as part of the next statutory Section 32 examination which is currently scheduled for 2023."

On 19 September 2023, the Department of Transport provided the following update for this Safety Recommendation:

"As previously stated, the Department is committed, as part of the next Section 32 examination to repeating a similar review of the Irish Aviation Authority completed by Bureau Veritas in 2021 which focused on areas of regulation that are outside the EU regulatory framework. It is anticipated that the Section 32 Examination will be commenced in the latter part of 2023. This is to allow time for the new Irish Aviation Authority (the single aviation regulator) to develop and implement new organisational structures following vesting day on 1 May 2023.

A further update will be provided in Q1-2024"

AAIU Comment:

The AAIU notes the Minister's response of 01 February 2022.

The AAIU notes the Section 32 examination scheduled for 2023 will include engagement with entities regulated by the IAA.

The AAIU considers the status of this Safety Recommendation to be 'In process of implementation'.

The AAIU notes the Minister's response of 19 September 2023.

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