Airport Safety Management Systems for Executives Training Course

19 - 23 Oct 2026

Cape town

4600 € (Per Person)

Ref: #AIR6565_270154

Course Introduction / Overview:

This comprehensive training course provides an in-depth exploration of Safety Management Systems (SMS) specifically tailored for the unique and complex airport environment. It is designed to equip airport executives and senior leaders with the strategic knowledge and practical skills necessary to champion, implement, and oversee a robust SMS that not only ensures regulatory compliance but also drives operational excellence and resilience. Moving beyond theoretical concepts, the curriculum delves into the practical application of the four ICAO pillars of SMS, addressing the real-world challenges faced by modern airports. As highlighted by safety science pioneer Dr. James Reason in his seminal work "Managing the Risks of Organizational Accidents", a proactive safety culture is the bedrock of any effective safety system. This course, offered by BIG BEN Training Center, integrates the principles articulated by Dr. James Reason, focusing on how leadership can foster a Just Culture, manage human factors, and build resilient systems. Participants will gain a strategic perspective on safety, learning to integrate SMS into core business processes, manage risks proactively, and lead their organizations toward a state of continuous safety improvement, ultimately protecting passengers, staff, and assets.

Target Audience / This training course is suitable for:

- Airport Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and Directors.
- Accountable Executives and Post Holders.
- Vice Presidents and Heads of Airport Operations.
- Airport Safety and Compliance Managers.
- Airside and Terminal Operations Directors.
- Senior Managers from Ground Handling Companies.
- Civil Aviation Authority Executives and Inspectors.
- Heads of Airport Emergency and Crisis Management.
- Senior leaders responsible for airport strategic planning.

Target Sectors and Industries:

- International, regional, and domestic airports.
- Civil Aviation Authorities and regulatory bodies.
- Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs).
- Ground handling and airport service companies.
- Fixed-Base Operators (FBOs).
- Government agencies involved in aviation oversight and security.
- Aviation consulting firms.

Target Organizations Departments:

- Executive Management and Leadership.
- Airport Operations and Airside Management.
- Safety, Quality, and Compliance Departments.
- Emergency Planning and Response.
- Security and Asset Protection.
- Ground Operations and Logistics.
- Technical Services and Maintenance.
- Human Resources and Training.
- Corporate Strategy and Development.

Course Offerings:

By the end of this course, the participants will have able to:

- Articulate the strategic business case for an effective SMS beyond mere regulatory compliance.
- Master the four components of the ICAO SMS framework and their practical application in an airport setting.
- Develop and champion a robust, positive safety policy and a proactive safety culture.
- Lead complex Safety Risk Management (SRM) processes for airside, terminal, and landside operations.
- Establish and monitor meaningful Safety Performance Indicators (SPIs) to drive continuous improvement.
- Oversee Safety Assurance (SA) activities, including audits, inspections, and management of change.
- Fulfill the specific safety responsibilities and accountabilities of an executive leader.
- Integrate SMS principles into the airport's overall strategic and financial planning.
- Effectively manage emergency response and crisis communication from a leadership perspective.
- Promote a Just Culture that encourages open reporting and learning from safety events.

Course Methodology:

The training methodology at BIG BEN Training Center is designed to be highly interactive, engaging, and directly applicable to the executive's role. We move beyond traditional lectures to create an immersive learning environment that fosters strategic thinking and practical problem-solving. The course is built upon a foundation of real-world airport case studies, analyzing both successes and failures in safety management to draw actionable lessons. Participants will engage in dynamic group workshops and syndicate exercises, where they will collaboratively tackle complex scenarios, such as conducting a high-level risk assessment for a runway expansion project or developing a safety promotion campaign. Interactive sessions, facilitated by seasoned aviation safety experts, encourage open dialogue and the sharing of experiences among peers. A significant portion of the course is dedicated to simulation-based activities, allowing executives to practice decision-making in a controlled environment. Continuous feedback is provided throughout the program, ensuring that participants can directly apply the learned concepts to their own organizations. This blended approach ensures a deep and lasting understanding of how to lead safety from the top.

Course Agenda (Course Units):

Unit One: Strategic Imperatives of Airport SMS

- The Evolution of Aviation Safety Thinking.
- Understanding the ICAO SMS Framework (Annex 19).
- The Business Case for SMS: Beyond Compliance to Performance.
- Regulatory Landscape: FAA, EASA, and National Requirements.
- The Role and Legal Responsibilities of the Accountable Executive.
- Defining the Scope and Boundaries of the Airport SMS.
- Integrating SMS with other Management Systems (e.g., QMS, SeMS).

Unit Two: Pillar 1 & 4 - Safety Policy and Safety Promotion

- Crafting an Effective Airport Safety Policy Statement.
- Setting SMART Safety Objectives and Performance Targets.
- Establishing Clear Lines of Safety Accountability and Responsibility.
- The Executive's Role in Championing a Positive Safety Culture.
- Developing and Implementing a Safety Communication Plan.
- Principles of a Just Culture and Non-Punitive Reporting.
- Designing Effective Safety Training and Education Programs for All Levels.

Unit Three: Pillar 2 - Safety Risk Management (SRM)

- Fundamentals of Hazard Identification in the Airport Environment.
- Systematic Risk Assessment and Analysis Methodologies.
- Practical Application: SRM for Airside, Terminal, and Ground Handling Operations.
- Developing and Implementing Effective Risk Mitigation Strategies.
- The Concept of As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP).
- Tools and Techniques for Proactive and Predictive Hazard Identification.
- Management of Change as a Critical SRM Process.

Unit Four: Pillar 3 - Safety Assurance (SA)

- Developing and Monitoring Safety Performance Indicators (SPIs).
- Conducting Effective SMS Audits and Inspections.
- Managing Findings and Implementing Corrective Action Plans.
- The Process of Continuous Improvement in Safety Performance.
- Data Collection, Analysis, and Safety Reporting Systems.
- Executive Management Review of Safety Performance.
- Leveraging Technology for Enhanced Safety Assurance.

Unit Five: Leadership in Action - Crisis, Culture, and Integration

- Leading During an Airport Emergency or Major Incident.
- Crisis Communication Strategies for Airport Executives.
- Advanced Human Factors Concepts for Senior Leaders.
- Measuring and Improving Your Airport's Safety Culture.
- Integrating SMS into Financial Planning and Budgeting.
- Future Trends in Airport Safety Management.
- Developing a Personal Action Plan for SMS Leadership.

FAQ:

Qualifications required for registering to this course?

There are no requirements.

How long is each daily session, and what is the total number of training hours for the course?

This training course spans five days, with daily sessions ranging between 4 to 5 hours, including breaks and interactive activities, bringing the total duration to 20 - 25 training hours.

Something to think about:

How can airport executives effectively balance the immense commercial pressures of the aviation industry with the non-negotiable, long-term investments required for a robust and proactive Safety Management System?

What unique qualities does this course offer compared to other courses?

This course distinguishes itself by being exclusively designed for the strategic perspective of airport executives and senior leaders, rather than offering a generic, one-size-fits-all approach to SMS. While other courses may focus heavily on the procedural aspects of compliance, this program emphasizes safety as a core business function and a driver of organizational resilience and performance. We move beyond the "what" of SMS to explore the "how" and "why" from a leadership standpoint, integrating advanced concepts from safety science pioneers like Dr. James Reason to focus on building a deeply embedded, proactive safety culture. The curriculum is rich with high-level, complex case studies relevant to executive decision-making, such as managing the safety implications of major infrastructure projects or navigating the reputational fallout of a serious incident. The methodology prioritizes peer-to-peer interaction among senior leaders, creating a unique forum for sharing strategic insights and challenges. Ultimately, this course is not about ticking boxes for auditors; it is about empowering executives with the vision and tools to lead their organizations toward the highest standards of safety excellence.