



**AIRPORTS COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL**  
**APEX IN SAFETY**  
**REFERENCE DOCUMENT**

**Working together to enhance airport operational safety**



Airports Council International (ACI) is the association of the world's airports. ACI is a non-profit organization, whose prime purpose is to advance the interests of airports and to promote professional excellence in airport management and operations. By fostering cooperation amongst airports, world aviation organizations and business partners, ACI makes a significant contribution to providing the travelling public with an air transport system that is safe, efficient and environmentally responsible.

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## Executive Summary

The mission of Airports Council International (ACI) is to promote the collective interest of the world's airports and the communities they serve and to promote professional excellence in airport operations and management. Safety is the top priority.

Recent ACI forecasts indicate that there will be over 15 billion passengers and 124 million aircraft movements per annum by 2031, meaning that aside from other operational measures, the existing world airport capacity would need to double over the next 15 years, resulting in a major investment in order to accommodate this added capacity demand.

The significant growth in the number of passengers, freight volume, and aircraft movements is expected to create additional burdens on a system under constant pressure to maintain safety levels. According to ICAO's Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) results (with 94 States audited from 2013 to 2015):

- 50% of audited states had not established procedures or processes and 61% had no guidance for airport certification and surveillance;
- More than 60% of audited states had not established a runway safety program related to runway incursions;
- 60% of audited states had not established a mechanism to rectify safety issues in a timely way;
- 77% of audited states had not implemented airport SMS, Aeronautical Studies or Risk Assessment processes;
- 45% had not reviewed Aerodrome Manuals periodically.

ACI, pursuing its mission of promoting safer airport operations while contributing to international cooperation between the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), aviation stakeholders and airports worldwide, has developed the **Airport Excellence (APEX) in Safety Programme**.

The programme is based on **ICAO standards**, as well as **ACI best practices**. APEX in Safety combines the mandate for regulatory compliance with the actual day-to-day operational needs of airports to maximize operational efficiency while enhancing the safety standards.

Moreover, APEX in Safety provides several elements tailored to the individual needs of airports and proposes effective solutions which lead to improving the safety standing of the airports who participate in the programme.

## About APEX in Safety

### Vision:

- To be the leading enabler of airport operational safety management by increasing the level of compliance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPS) through cooperation with industry stakeholders

### Mission:

- To assist airports in their efforts to improve their safety performance; to implement safety management systems; to establish indicators and tools for the reduction of safety incidents, as well as tailor ACI engagement to the airports operating environment, regional aviation safety goals, requirements for airport certification, and establishment of Runway Safety Teams
- To increase the level of compliance with applicable standards and foster the sharing of best safety practices amongst the airport community

## Audience and Stakeholders

APEX in Safety is based on **ICAO Annex 14 Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPS)** and **ACI best practices**. It takes the form of a Safety Review, including a self-assessment of: the safety level, gap analysis, recommended solutions and design of an action plan following an on-site visit at an airport which has requested assistance to enhance its level of safety.

### Safety Review

A Safety Review is the process of carrying out an on-site safety assessment at an airport based on the results of a self-assessment safety questionnaire, making proposals for an Action Plan, and recommending solutions to optimize the safety standing of the requesting airport.

### Host Airport

The Host Airport is the airport that requests the Safety Review.

### Host Airport Benefits:

- Ensure an enhanced level of safety by gaining appropriate knowledge of regulatory standards, best operational practices, and training needs/options
- Self-evaluate its safety performance
- Access to a pool of expertise that will enable the Host Airport to mitigate any gaps in safety as required by its specific operating environment

<b>APEX in Safety Benefits</b>
Tailored approach
Measures that can be immediately implemented
Access to global network of safety experts
Practical application
Creation of Action Plan
Effective results within reach
Appropriate solutions based on specific operational environment
ICAO regulatory aspects covered
Access to knowledge data base
Access to documentation
Guidance material provided
Training, workshops, and further assistance available

## Host Airport Documentation

Prior to the Safety Review, the Host Airport fills out and submits a self-evaluation questionnaire to ACI called the **APEX Advance Questionnaire**; the aim of which is to identify key areas where additional time should be spent by the ACI Safety Review Team while conducting the on-site assessment. When submitting the questionnaire, the Host Airport provides an electronic version of the relevant procedures and documentation requested in the SAF Aerodrome Documentation Form. This is an important step in the evaluation of the operational needs and the selection of the appropriate Safety Partners.

## APEX Safety Partner

The **Safety Partner is an airport** that has the required know-how and volunteers to provide the Host Airport with one or more experts for the purpose of performing the Safety Review. The services of the Safety Partner are provided without charge for the entire duration of the Safety Review with the objective of assisting the Host Airport to improve their safety standards.

## Safety APEX Partner Benefits:

- Provides the chance to assist airports improve their safety standing
- Opportunity to learn from the Safety Review process
- Increases the level of cooperation and sense of community among airports worldwide

ACI proudly acknowledges our Safety Partners' contribution to fostering safety and international cooperation through a variety of communication channels and at ACI events worldwide.

## Stakeholders

APEX in Safety involves a number of stakeholders, including: airlines, air navigation service providers and regulators/oversight authorities. The safety goals of these stakeholders are harmonized to the greatest extent possible during the Safety Review and are given due consideration during the on-site visit at the Host Airport.

## Safety Review – The process

ACI coordinates and dispatches an **ACI Safety Review Team of experts** to the Host Airport, with the goal of improving safety in specific areas of interest.

Upon request from the Host Airport, APEX in Safety can provide a Safety Review of any safety area.

### Safety Expertise Include:

- Runway Safety
- Safety Management Systems (SMS)
- Aerodrome Certification
- Wildlife Hazard Management
- Markings, Signs and Lighting
- Rescue and Firefighting
- Emergency Response
- Airside Driver and Vehicle Management
- Management of Ground Handlers
- Contractual and Legal Issues
- Improvement of AIP Documentation
- Low Visibility Procedure
- Obstacle Management
- Winter Operations
- FOD Management
- Movement Area Maintenance
- Movement Area Access
- Aerodrome Works Safety
- Apron Safety Management
- Removal of Disabled Aircraft
- Hazardous Material Handling

A typical Safety Review lasts **one week**. The number of ACI Safety Review Team members depends on the complexity of the assessment requested. The team should normally include an ACI Regional Office Safety Assessor, an ICAO-designated Safety Officer, and one or more Safety Partners, under the supervision of a Team Leader. Other experts may be included in the team if the extent of the Safety Review so demands.

The Safety Partner does not pursue any commercial interests and acts in the sole interest of the Host Airport during the Safety Review.

The ACI Safety Review Team conducts a gap analysis and assessment of the safety standing at the Host Airport and provides a **preliminary (draft) report** within six (6) weeks from the end of the visit. A **final report** with recommendations is forwarded to the Host Airport Senior Management within eight (8) weeks from the end of the visit, containing the observations made by the ACI Safety Review Team. The Final Report emphasizes the solutions that could be adopted by the Host Airport to enhance the level of safety.

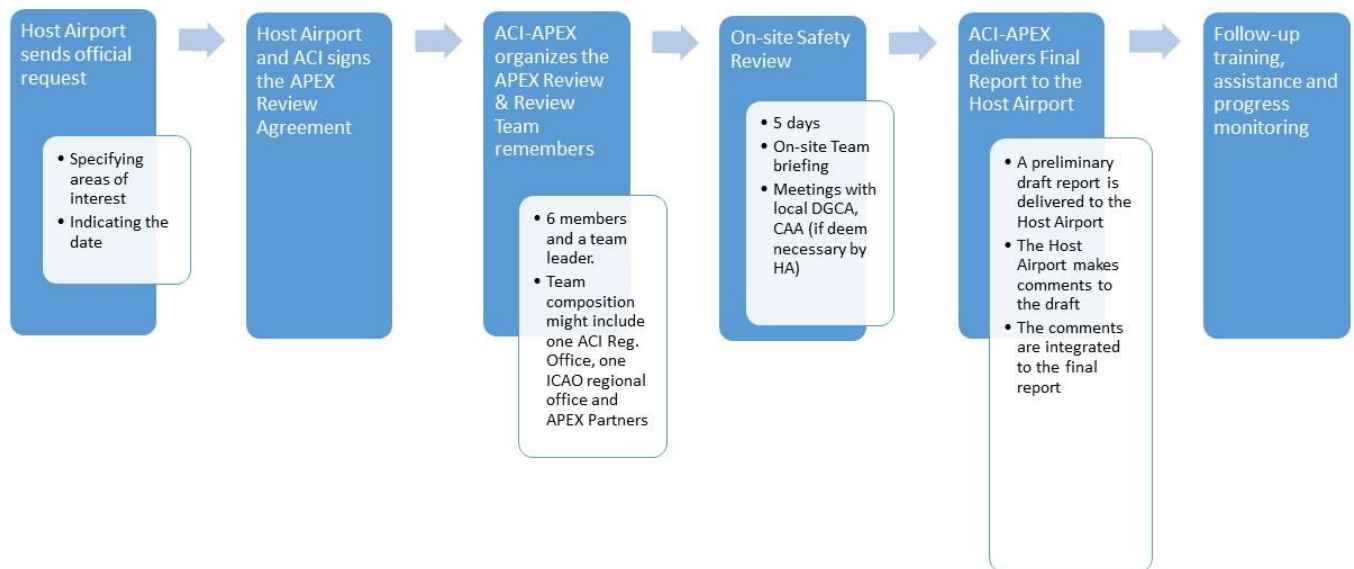
Based on the conclusions from the Final Report, the Host Airport drafts an **action plan** which contains its short, medium, and long-term safety improvement goals, as well as the means and actions that are deemed most appropriate to achieve these results.

The overarching APEX in Safety goal of improving safety is reached when the Host Airport acts upon the proposed mitigating measures.

An ACI support team will guide the Host Airport in the implementation of the most appropriate safety measures.

## Timeline

The estimated time required for the planning of the review after signature of the contract is on average **8 weeks** from the time the agreement is signed. The final report is issued after **60 days** of the completion of the review.



Under the APEX in Safety Programme, the Host Airport directly benefits from dedicated ACI support staff to achieve the goals set in the Action Plan. Various means of assistance are available, such as access to: **pool of experts, training, workshops, seminars, and working groups at local, regional and international levels.**

The APEX in Safety Programme also benefits ICAO by providing valuable insight regarding the current safety standing and the future capabilities of the visited airports to close the safety gaps identified. The data collected may be used by ICAO as part of the integrated global aviation safety net, with the ultimate goal of improving aviation safety worldwide.



## Cost of the Safety Review

The Host Airport is responsible for covering the **direct costs** for the ACI Safety Review Team for the duration of the Safety Review adhering to ACI World travel policy depending on the travel duration and a **fixed programme cost** is also included in the estimate that will be provided.

**No consultancy fees** will be charged by ACI.

The Safety Review is performed on a **non-remunerative basis**. When scheduling and setting up the ACI Safety Review Team, ACI makes every effort to keep the review **costs to the minimum**.

## Evaluation, Tracking and Follow-up

An important part of the APEX in Safety Programme is to ensure that effective assistance is provided to the Host Airport for: the implementation of a Safety Management System, the achievement of regional aviation safety goals and airport certification requirements, the establishment of runway safety teams as well as mitigation of other safety-related deficiencies.

As the Host Airport implements mitigating measures, a periodic evaluation of the airport's safety performance is needed and highly recommended. The Safety Review results should be updated accordingly to reflect the progress made.

## How to Request a Safety Review

ACI delivers the APEX in Safety Programme **to every member airport** interested in achieving excellence in safety.

To request a Safety Review, contact us by email [apex@aci.aero](mailto:apex@aci.aero) or by simply making the request through our ACI World website <https://store.aci.aero/form/host-an-apex-review/>

## Confidentiality

The results from the Security Review are **confidential**. The ACI Security Review Team ensures that any documentation or information received by the host airport before or through the visit on-site remain confidential unless consent has been obtained from the party concerned. Benefits may be gained from sharing or discussing part or all of the review results with the national regulator or ICAO, but this will be at the discretion of the airport.

## 5 ACI Contact Information

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