



NATIONAL SAFE SKIES ALLIANCE

Program for Applied Research in Airport Security

PARAS 0009 Project Summary

Project Title:	Guidance for Security Management Systems (SeMS)		
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BACKGROUND

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has stated, “With the expected growth in air transportation, we will need to make greater efforts and adopt new measures to continue improving aviation safety. The use of Safety Management Systems (SMS) at airports can contribute to this effort by helping airports detect and correct safety problems before they result in aircraft accidents or incidents.”¹ To this end, the FAA has provided SMS guidance, tools, and related information to airports to foster this effort, including an SMS Implementation Study and airport SMS pilot studies.

However, very little guidance has been made available to address the similar concept of a Security Management System (SeMS). An SeMS is based upon the idea that practitioners in all aspects of the aviation system retain situational awareness in order to identify security vulnerabilities and weaknesses. These represent risks that can contribute to an aviation security incident. Like aviation safety mishaps, successful attacks upon our aviation system may not be single point failures.

The underlying concept of an SeMS is to create a culture in which aviation workers identify and report areas of risk at an operational level so those risks can be assessed and mitigated by responsible management action. It is the airport operators’ responsibility to foster this culture of identification and reporting of risks/hazards at all levels of the organization. An SeMS assists airport operators in identifying, assessing, and mitigating security risks.

A single guidance document that addresses the purpose, applicability, and implementation of an SeMS will assist airport operators in enhancing their security posture.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research is to provide airport operators with a guidance document to develop, implement, and maintain an SeMS program. The concepts and practices in the guidebook shall be scalable to airport types and sizes. The guidebook shall include, at a minimum:

- Overview of SeMS

¹ https://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_safety/safety_management_systems/, September 2015

- Definition of an SeMS
- Explanation of SeMS benefits
- SMS principals applicable to SeMS
- SeMS framework and templates for developing, implementing, and maintaining the system
- Methods for stakeholder engagement and creating a culture of security
- Methods to identify security best practices
- Methods to identify and assess security risks
- Resources, to include personnel, that may be necessary to support SeMS
- Case studies demonstrating benefits of SeMS