

FAA SMS Compliance Act of 2026

Section-by-Section Summary

Sec. 1. Short Title; Table of Contents

This section designates the bill's title as the "FAA SMS Compliance Act of 2026".

Sec. 2. Expert Compliance Review of FAA Safety Management System

Subsection (a). Expert Compliance Review.

This section directs the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to convene an independent expert review panel no later than 60 days after enactment to review and evaluate FAA orders and policies to inform FAA's implementation of a comprehensive and integrated safety management system (SMS) within the FAA.

The review panel is directed to review:

- (i) The extent to which FAA's SMS complies with relevant FAA orders and policies;
- (ii) The actual and projected safety enhancements achieved through FAA's prior implementation of SMS;
- (iii) The effectiveness of FAA's SMS including with respect to the four pillars of SMS as designated by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO);
- (iv) The extent to which FAA's safety culture promotes or fosters FAA's SMS consistent with ICAO's latest Safety Management manual
- (v) The effectiveness of FAA's internal audit process to determine the performance of FAA's SMS;
- (vi) The extent to which the SMS and each of the four components of SMS are integrated appropriately among and across lines of business of the FAA and understood by, communicated to, and included in training for the personnel at the FAA;
- (vii) The efficacy of existing SMS in place at applicable lines of business at the FAA, including but not limited to the Air Traffic Organization, the Aviation Safety Office, and the Office of Airports;
- (viii) The efficacy of FAA's Voluntary Safety Reporting Program as part of SMS, including the efficacy of specific voluntary safety reporting programs at applicable lines of business, and any actions taken by FAA in response to reports filed under such programs;
- (ix) Whether the United States should advocate at ICAO for changes, as appropriate, to Annex 19-Safety Management of the ICAO to ensure appropriate updates to the State Safety Program; and

- (x) Any other matter determined by the Administrator for which review by the review panel would be consistent with the public interest in aviation safety.

The section prescribes at least 20 specific members of the expert review panel, centered around individuals with expertise in SMS or whose job responsibilities include the administration of a SMS, to be appointed by the FAA Administrator and five advisory members of the FAA, at least three of whom shall be subject matter experts in implementing SMS at the FAA.

This section requires the review panel to issue a report with its findings and recommendations to inform FAA's implementation of a comprehensive and integrated SMS at FAA to the FAA Administrator 180 days after the first meeting of the panel. The FAA must issue the panel's report to Congress within 5 days of receipt.

Subsection (b). Non-concurrence with Recommendations

This section requires the FAA to provide a detailed explanation for each recommendation issued by the review panel that the FAA does not concur with. FAA is required to publish on the FAA website and submit such determination(s) to Congress within six months after the review panel submits its recommendations to the FAA.

Subsection (c). Definitions

This section provides global definitions for the terms "Administrator", "Appropriate Committees of Congress", "FAA", "ICAO," and "SMS".