1.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM

The Air Carriers Safety Working Group has established and maintains a Quality Assurance Program (QAP) that covers all functions defined within the North Star Practices and includes all elements necessary to ensure compliance with The North Star Practices. The objective of the QAP is to verify that the applicable requirements are being applied and used to assess operational conditions, organizational structure and record keeping systems that address the safety requirements as defined by the NSP.

1.1 TITLES, ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

ACSWG: Air Carriers Safety Working Group

CAP: Corrective Action Plan-A plan submitted in response to **(NC)** Non-Compliant Findings. The CAP describes the Non-Compliant Finding and describes what action is to be taken to address the identified finding. The CAP Identifies and describes a root cause and describes any new risks associated with the

corrective action. The CAP contains a timeline for addressing, correcting and recording the Audit Finding when the CAP was completed.

FDG: (Finding or Audit Finding)- An Audit Finding that does not meet the NSP requirements. An Audit Finding falls under the following two categories.

(NC): Non-Compliant-any audit finding that does not meet the NSP requirements. A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) must be created.

(O): Observations-Any other finding not considered an **(NC)** non-compliant finding, such as an administrative issue. Observations need only be entered in the Audit Finding records.

Flagged Finding. Any Finding observed, that has this symbol beside it, automatically disqualifies the Operator for an NSP Endorsement. To requalify, the Operator must demonstrate through a follow-up audit that they are compliant with the NSP requirements.

NSP: North Star Practices

NSP Operator: Any Operator striving to enhance safety within their operation by utilizing the procedures listed in the North Star Practices. The Operator is someone who while performing their duties, can show that they are striving to enhance safety to a higher (NSP) standard and therefore, are eligible for a North Star Endorsement.

Operator: A company or individual that provides the aircraft/service for transporting anyone to and/or from their place of work or any destination when referring to the public.

PRM: Person Responsible for Maintenance

QAM: Quality Assurance Manager

QAP: Quality Assurance Program

SMS: Safety Management System-Allows an Operator on their own, without necessarily oversight from Transport Canada to identify hazards, manage risks, and develop and follow effective safety processes.

1.2 INDEX

Contents:

1.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM 1
1.1 TITLES, ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS 1
1.2 INDEX 3
1.3 AUDITORS 4
1.3.1 Auditor Training and Qualifications 4
1.4 AUDIT DESCRIPTION 4
1.4.1 Audit Checklists 4
1.4.2 Endorsement Process and Frequency 5
1.4.3 Scope 5
1.4.4 Criteria 5
1.4.5 Methods-Sampling 6
1.4.6 Methods-Random Selection 6
1.5 AUDIT PROCESS 6
1.5.1 Performing the audit 6
1.5.2 Findings 7
1.5.3 Audit Completion 7
1.6 NON-COMPLIANCE FINDINGS 8
1.6.1 Corrective Action Plans 8
1.6.2 Description of the finding 8
1.6.3 Corrective Action 8
1.6.4 Root cause analysis 8
1.6.5 CAP Completion and Acceptance 8
1.6.6 CAP Timeline 9
1.7 AUDITOR COMPETANCE 9
1.8 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM RECORDS 9
APPENDIX 10
1.9 AUDITOR TRAINING EXAM 11

1.3 AUDITORS

The Operator will utilize an outside third party to perform their audits as required by the NSP during the three-year external audit requirements. All Auditors must meet the "Auditor Training and Qualifications" listed below.

Internal auditing i.e. years 1 and 2 must be completed as per NSP requirements but may be conducted by internal or external Auditors.

1.3.1 Auditor Training and Qualifications

All persons performing an audit under this QAP must have the following qualifications:

Auditors will be familiar with the type of organization they are auditing and the applicable provincial and federal regulatory requirements applicable to the operation. They will also understand the NSP Quality Assurance Program, become familiar with the NSP Static/ Dynamic formats and pass the Auditor Training Exam attached to the bottom of this document. This attached exam is to be completed along with any documentation that proves that the Auditor is qualified to perform an NSP audit and kept on file with the Operator.

The Operator must ensure no conflict of interest with their operation and the Auditor. This criterion is required to ensure and therefore, protect the credibility of the auditing process. How this is done, is the responsibility of the Operator.

All potential Auditors must have completed the following training prior to performing an audit under this QAP:

Auditor Training: Completed in the last 36 months, either internal or external training.

Any Auditor training from a reputable source is acceptable, such as online training or Auditor training received from Industry seminars and workshops (documentation must be provided to and approved by the Operator). A list of Auditors and their qualifications are to be kept on file with the Operator. It is the Auditor's responsibility to ensure that their training credentials are kept current.

1.4 AUDIT DESCRIPTION

The audit will cover all functions defined within the NSP Static and Dynamic Audits format, by conducting reviews and audits of the Operator's processes, procedures, analyses, inspections, training and flight operations.

1.4.1 Audit Checklists

Detailed Audit Check sheets and applicable documents are available on the FOA-Floatplane Operators Association website http://www.floatplaneOperators.org/ or northstarpractices.org or available on request from the Air Carriers Safety Working Group jimhartwell@hotmail.com. Audit checklists are broken down into two formats 1. NSP Static Audit. 2. NSP Dynamic Audit.

1.4.2 Endorsement Process and Frequency

The endorsement process and frequency begin with the Operator registering with the Air Carriers Safety Working Group. Operators are expected to allow themselves a six-month grace-period in which to align their operation with those of the North Star Practices. During this time, the Operator develops or modifies their Safety Management System. By aligning their operation with the NSP and therefore, ensuring compliance, the Operator can better understand and recognize any safety items that need to be addressed. Next, the Operator conducts an audit. Any identifiable issues or concerns discovered from the audit process are addressed at this point in the Operator's SMS. The ACSWG then does a Quality Assurance Audit review and following an approval rating the Operator is awarded the NSP Endorsement.

The initial audit process is expected to be conducted internally by the Operator to identify any gaps in their current safety management system. It is at this stage in the process that the Operator is expected to address any areas requiring further attention regarding alignment with the NSP. It should be noted that the ACSWG is available to aid the Operator in this process where appropriate. Once the Operator is satisfied that their current SMS addresses NSP requirements, a quality assurance audit review is conducted by the ACSWG. Once the Operator is successful in addressing quality assurance audit requirements they are recognized as an NSP participant.

Following the issuance of the NSP recognition an annual audit is required. This is an internal audit conducted, compiled and submitted by the NSP Operator to the ACSWG. The intent of this audit is to identify any further fine-tuning of the current Operator's SMS and to ensure any incidents or safety issues captured during the previous annual operating period were documented and addressed via appropriate corrective action. Subsequent audits (for the following 2 years) may be carried out by the Operator or an independent Auditor. The audits are to be conducted annually within 12 months from the previous audit, +/- 1 month. See Page 10: Appendix- (NSP Endorsement Process Flowchart).

Once every three years an independent audit is required, to be carried out by a qualified independent third party. The results of the audit are submitted to the ACSWG for review to confirm the Operator qualifies for reissuance of the NSP endorsement.

Costs for the independent audits are to be decided upon by the NSP Operator and the Auditor.

1.4.3 Scope

Each individual audit will cover the time period from the start date of the last audit to the scheduled start date of the present audit, +/- 1 month. The scope (areas to be observed) are described in the individual audit checklists.

1.4.4 Criteria

All audits will be conducted using established criteria, based on the NSP. The actual criteria for each individual audit will be described in the NSP Static and Dynamic audit checklist itself, to allow the Auditor to determine alignment with the NSP.

1.4.5 Methods-Sampling

The audit will be conducted using methods described in the Audit Checklists, they may consist of, but are not limited to record reviews, personnel interviews, equipment and facility inspections and flight operations.

Sampling may be utilized to determine the sample lot of an audit subject area. If sampling is required for a Dynamic audit, the sample size will be specified on that audit check-sheet.

Lot/fleet size	1 – 3 aircraft	1 or more aircraft
Sample size	1 aircraft and 1 flight operation	2 aircraft and 2 flight operations (if possible)

1.4.6 Methods-Random Selection

Where sampling is employed, the specific method of random sampling will be dictated on the audit check-sheet itself. Where the method of random selection is not dictated on the audit check-sheet itself, a randomizer may be utilized to determine the specific records that will be sampled and subject to an audit. The following randomizer may be used, but any randomizer may be utilized: http://numbergenerator.org A record of the randomizer results will be retained with the audit package.

1.5 AUDIT PROCESS

1.5.1 Performing the audit

The Operator will be responsible for scheduling audits and retaining Auditors to perform an audit. Audits will be performed in accordance with the audit schedule maintained by the Operator.

Auditors will use the appropriate audit checklist in the NSP Static and Dynamic Audit format. Questions in the checklist will prompt a review, search or investigation into various aspects of the operation and documents as may be applicable.

While actioning the Check Sheets, the item may call for the gathering of data. This will be noted on the notes section of the associated check sheets and form part of the audit data. Some Check Sheets have specific data entry areas attached. These will be used when provided. Auditors shall not leave any checklist audit item blank. Auditors may make comments on the audit check lists. However, all findings must be transferred to the NSP “Audit Finding Record”, as described below.

1.5.2 Findings

Any findings identified during the audit process will be recorded on the "NSP Audit Finding Record". The Operator and designated Auditor will review the findings and determine its classification as a Non-Compliance Finding or an Observation, as described below:

Non-Compliance finding (NC)

This is any finding other than an (O) Observation, that does not meet the NSP practices. A corrective action plan (CAP) shall be developed for all non-compliance findings.

Note: Any incidents, accidents or any finding which affects an aircrafts' airworthiness, or is of imminent aviation safety, will be dealt with immediately and reported immediately to the ACSWG and the proper authorities. Any audit finding that bears a red flag automatically disqualifies the Operator for an NSP Endorsement. To requalify, the Operator must demonstrate through a follow-up audit that they are compliant with the NSP requirements.

Observations (O)

This is any other finding not considered a 'Non-Compliance Finding', such as an administrative issue. Observations do not require a full corrective action plan (CAP). An observation will only be documented on the "NSP Audit Finding Record"

1.5.3 Audit Completion

During the audit, any finding which affects the aircraft airworthiness, or is of imminent aviation safety, will be dealt with immediately. The NSP Operator will be notified by the Auditor of the issue and will handle the situation on a case by case basis.

At completion of the audit, the Auditor is responsible for supplying the completed audit check sheet along with any supporting documentation and the "NSP Audit Finding Record" form, to the Operator. Supporting documentation consists of, but is not limited to:

-records for determination of the sample lot (such as the randomizer results).

-records of compliance (copies or a list of all the items in the sample lot).

-records of non-compliance (a list of the non-compliance items, this may be recorded in the "NSP Audit Finding Record" with evidence attached where possible).

All findings will be communicated to the Operator. The Operator will complete the Corrective Action Plan.

1.6 NON-COMPLIANCE FINDINGS

All Non-Compliance findings will have a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) created by the Operator.

1.6.1 Corrective Action Plans

The Corrective Action Plan (CAP) describes the problem, documents the root cause analysis used to identify the causes of the non-compliance, describes the corrective action to correct the finding, (to mitigate or eliminate the root causes).

CAPs are documented on the "NSP Corrective Action Plan" as follows:

1.6.2 Description of the finding

This section is used to describe the finding and lists the examples provided by the Auditor. It will also describe as to why the finding is not in compliance with (the CARs and most specifically the NSP practices).

1.6.3 Corrective Action

This section will describe the corrective action used to eliminate the specific finding example. If required, a further review to check for other examples of the finding may need to be performed in order to establish the appropriate corrective action required.

1.6.4 Root cause analysis

Conduct a root cause analysis using a standard industry procedure to determine the root cause(s) that led to the finding. Examples of acceptable procedure for root cause analysis are the 5 why's, Ishikawa Fishbone, or cause mapping. Record the root cause process and attach to the CAP form.

1.6.5 CAP Completion and Acceptance

The Operator is responsible to ensure CAPs are completed.

When follow-up action has been completed and the CAP has shown to be effective, each CAP will be reviewed for completion and filed by the Operator.

If the follow-up action is completed and the CAP is shown to be ineffective in preventing a reoccurrence of the Non-Compliance, a new CAP will be created. Once Follow-up action of the new CAP shows the CAP to be effective, the CAP will be accepted by the Operator and filed for the following annual NSP audit.

The NSP Operator is responsible with providing an annual report to the ACSWG that summarizes all the findings and corrective actions taken in the Quality Assurance Program.

1.6.6 CAP Timeline

CAP creation: The CAP must be created and filed with the NSP Operator before the following annual audit.

1.7 AUDITOR COMPETANCE

The NSP Operator will confirm Auditor training currency, prior to the audit. Upon completion of the audit, the NSP Operator will conduct a review of the completed audit package to ensure completion and comprehension of the QAP process, ensuring Auditor competency.

1.8 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM RECORDS

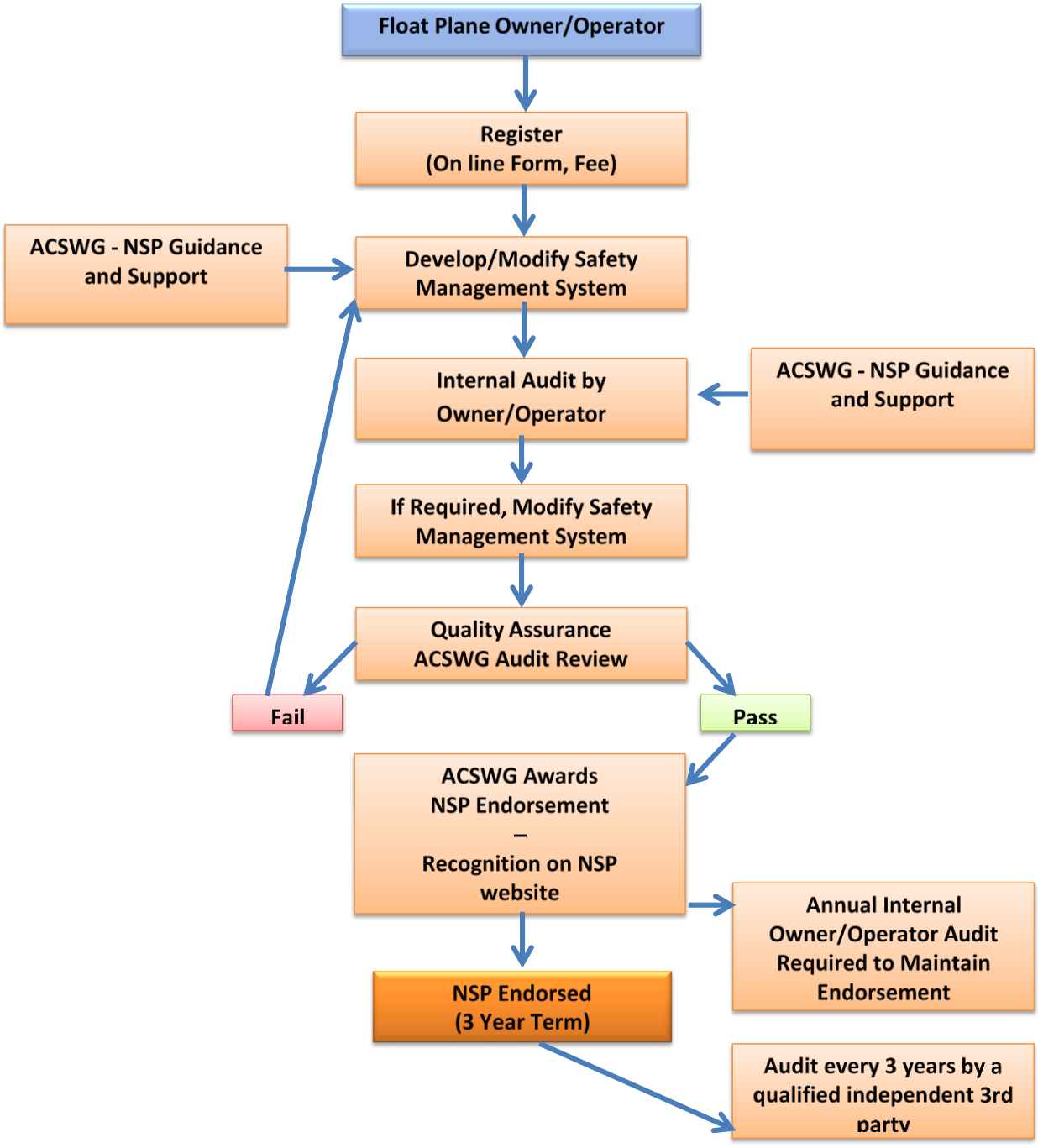
The NSP Operator is responsible for the control of records relating to the QAP. The NSP Operator will ensure that all records pertaining to the QAP are compiled and retained as required in accordance with the NSP and regulatory requirements. QAP records include, but are not limited to: Audit check sheets, records of compliance and non-compliance, corrective action plans and all supporting documentation and evidence.

The records shall be maintained for the greater of two (2) complete audit cycles or two (2) years.

Audit findings and action required by a CAP may be incorporated into the training program for ‘Additional Training’ if desired.

APPENDIX

(NSP) Endorsement Process Flow Chart



1.9 AUDITOR TRAINING EXAM

NAME: _____ _____DATE: _____

TRAINER/EXAMINER: _____SCORE: _____

MUST be Corrected to 100%

To be eligible to conduct QAP Audits for the ACSWG, you must become familiar with the NSP Static/ Dynamic formats, Auditor Training and Qualifications criteria (Section 1.3.1) and pass the following test.

1. The QA program is the responsibility of whom?

2. The Auditor must be someone who?

    a. Understands the NSP Quality Assurance Program.
    b. Is familiar with the applicable provincial and federal regulatory requirements applicable to the operation.
    c. Has completed Auditor training within the last 36 months.
    d. All of the above.

3. The QAP audit must be completed in each area within what timeframe?

    a. 2 years
    b. 12 months
    c. 12 months +/- 1 month
    d. 36 months

4. The Audit will be sure to cover what timeframe from the past?

    a. The previous 2 years.
    b. The previous 6 months only
    c. The period of time from the date of the last audit in the specific area

5. When determining Lot Size, where will you find the sampling table?

    a. TC web site
    b. www.randomizer.org
    c. MCM 1.3.5
    d. NSP Dynamic Audit format

6. When gathering data, the Operator/QAM presents you with a “Random Sample” to save you time, “digging all that stuff out”, you should?

    a. Thank him/her as it will likely save you time.
    b. Advise him/her that you will need to see all the records and sample/find your own samples randomly.
    c. Suspect that there may be discrepancies and try to examine all the records in that area.

7. Can you leave an audit item on the check sheets blank?

a. YES
b. NO

8. During the audit you find that a certain item has been overlooked that may jeopardize safety. You should:

a. Make notes in the Audit Observations after marking in NC.
b. Advise the ACSWG.
c. Advise the NSP Operator/QAM immediately, then document for the ACSWG review.
d. Notify Transport Canada immediately.
e. All of the above

9. Is it your job to suggest recommendations to solve any NC?

a. YES
b. NO

10. Should you retain and submit all documentation used in the audit or just the final observation data?

a. YES, all documents.
b. NO, only the completed Check lists and Audit Observation forms.

11. How long should completed audits be kept and available for review?

a. 1 year
b. 2 years
c. 1 previous audit cycle
d. The greater of 2 previous audit cycles or 2 years

12. You are auditing a certain item and you find that the process is correctly matching the North Star Practices, but you know that it doesn't meet current CARs requirements. How do you mark this down?

a. Mark it as an 'NC' and give reason. Advise the PRM/NSP Operator/QAM.
b. Mark as an 'O' and give reason.
c. Ignore it, you are only auditing against the North Star Practices, it isn't your problem.
d. Call TC and send them details.
e. a. and d.
f. b. and c.

NOTES: