

## TRAINING COURSE

# Mental Health Risk Management (MH-SAF)

## Introduction

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In-flight or on-duty incapacitation of pilots or ATCOs is a rare event which may, infrequently, be caused by a mental issue, as confirmed by the results of the studies addressing the causes of pilots' and ATCOs' unfitness to work. The risk that mental issues pose to the safety of operations can be low, moderate or high: not all mental issues are long-term or characterised by abnormal, unpredictable and deviant behaviours. Moreover, not all mental issues lead to limitations on the medical certificate.

Our mental status affects our cognitive functioning as it influences our ability to focus attention, remember and analyze information, solve problems, make decisions and communicate with others. When we are mentally healthy, we are more likely to properly concentrate, learn, and plan. This can lead to successful performance at work, including reduced errors and violations, as well as increased safety. On the other hand, mental issues may act as preconditions for unsafe acts.

According to a recent European study (the MESAFE report on the risk of incapacitation, 2022), pilots and ATCOs agree that mental health issues can have an impact on the safety of operations. A considerable percentage of them reported finding it difficult to detect signs and symptoms of mental discomfort in themselves, and being able to easily detect signs and symptoms of alcohol, drugs and other psychoactive substances abuse in colleagues. In line with this, less than 50% of each group reported usually taking action when a colleague showed signs and symptoms of stress. Loss of licence concerns, fear of repercussions, and cultural biases towards mental issues might further hinder the pilots' and ATCOs willingness to seek psychological support for mental issues. These findings suggest that more attention should be paid to the mental health topic, creating awareness and providing pilots and ATCOs with individual strategies for proactive management of mental issues, before they endanger safety. Creating a just-culture environment on mental issues, including education, training and peer support programs are some of the actions that can be taken to break the stigma and fear around this topic.

This course presents approaches and techniques for proactive management of mental health risks. Through a practical approach, it will show how to reduce and neutralize mental health risk factors by identifying, assessing, and addressing risks before they happen. Proactive detection and management of mental issues, at individual and organisational level, can help assess and mitigate the incapacitation risk they pose to pilots and ATCOs performance, and ultimately to the safety of operations before they could be endangered.



## COURSE DURATION

2 Days: 09:00 - 17:00 hrs

## TARGET GROUP

Target audience:

- Policy advisors, safety inspectors and other experts from CAAs wishing to understand how mental health affects safety
- Managers from airline companies and ANSPs
- ATCOs, pilots, cabin crew, instructors and other aviation professionals wanting to receive training on mental health and safety
- Aeromedical Examiners (AMEs) carrying out aircrew and ATCO medical examinations who want to increase their knowledge of mental health risks in aviation.

Read more about the course Content, Learning Objectives and Pre-requisites on the website:  
[www.jaato.com](http://www.jaato.com)