



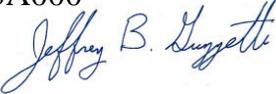
Memorandum

U.S. Department of
Transportation

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Audit Announcement – Review
of FAA’s Oversight of the Voluntary Disclosure
Reporting Program
Federal Aviation Administration
Project No. 12A3013A000

Date: September 10, 2012

From: Jeffrey B. Guzzetti 
Assistant Inspector General
for Aviation and Special Program Audits

Reply to
Attn. of: JA-10

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

In 2006, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) established the Voluntary Disclosure Reporting Program (VDRP), which allows air carriers to voluntarily report adverse safety issues to FAA without fear of enforcement actions. While this program provides an important opportunity to identify and mitigate safety issues that might not otherwise come to the Agency’s attention, it also requires close monitoring by FAA to ensure the program is not misused. For example, in 2008, we reported that FAA allowed a major airline to repeatedly self-disclose violations of mandatory safety directives without ensuring the carrier had developed and implemented solutions to prevent recurrence of the reported problems. Carriers are required to develop comprehensive solutions to identified safety issues in order for FAA to accept the disclosure and absolve the carrier of any penalty.¹ We also expressed concern that FAA may rely too heavily on self-disclosures to identify safety issues, which may promote a pattern of leniency in the acceptance and closure of these reports.

The FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 included a mandate that the Office of Inspector General examine FAA’s oversight of VDRP. Accordingly, our audit objectives are to determine whether FAA (1) ensures that air carrier disclosure reports meet FAA requirements prior to acceptance into the Voluntary Disclosure Reporting Program and (2) evaluates the effectiveness of air carrier corrective actions prior to closing the reports.

¹ OIG Correspondence Number CC-2008-046, “Actions Needed To Strengthen FAA’s Safety Oversight and Use of Partnership Programs,” April 3, 2008. OIG Report Number AV-2008-057, “Review of FAA’s Safety Oversight of Airlines and Use of Regulatory Partnership Programs,” June 30, 2008.

Our audit will include visits to FAA Headquarters and regional offices as well as select Flight Standards Service field offices that oversee commercial airlines. We plan to begin this audit September 19, 2012. If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 366-0500 or Tina Nysted, Program Director, at (404) 562-3770.

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cc: FAA Audit Liaison, AAE-100
DOT Audit Liaison, M-1