Safety Awareness for Users of Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) in Close Vicinity of Airports
IATA, ACI, IFALPA
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I. Background:

1.1 Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA), commonly known as drones, are increasingly being used, for commercial and recreational purposes.

1.2 There has been a very large increase in reports from all regions of the world of instances in which drones have been observed being flown dangerously close to aircraft and airports.

1.3 A review of 856 safety reports was carried out, to analyze the safety risks associated with drones. [1]

- The analysis showed a significant increase in the monthly number of reported drone encounters.

- There was no correlation between the distance from the airport or the altitude of the drone and the likelihood of a near collision. Therefore, risk of collision with aircraft is at all altitudes and locations.

- The drones encountered were primarily small in size (less than 6 feet in length/diameter).

- Reports were not limited to recreational drones.

II. Safety Risks:

Flying a drone in the close vicinity of an airport or an aircraft can pose a serious risk to the safety of those on board the aircraft. In the event of a collision or near-collision between the drone and the aircraft, the resulting accident could cause loss of life.

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[1] The period covered in the analysis is from January 2013 to August 2015. Data was obtained from 7 official sources, 87% (743 of 856) of the reports used in the analysis came from North American data sources.

III. Protect public safety by operating RPA responsibly:

3.1 In many jurisdictions, governments have made it a criminal offence to fly a drone in a dangerous or reckless manner that endangers an aircraft and several others are taking similar steps. It is important to ensure that users and operators of drones act responsibly and are aware of the rules that are in place to keep everyone safe.

3.2 Drone users and operators should:;

3.2.1 **Check and follow all local laws before flying a drone.**

3.2.2 **Use common sense and fly safely.** The following are some recommendations extracted from existing regulations to guide drone operators:

- Keep the drone within visual line of sight and within its control range.

- Remain below any surrounding obstacles, and do not fly the drone above the restricted limit.

- Always keep the drone well away from aircraft, helicopters, airports and airfields..

- If absolutely necessary to operate within the vicinity of an airport, contact the airport operator and control tower for approval before flying. Different countries have different requirements pertaining to how close to an airport a drone may be flown.

- Keep a safe distance from people, vehicles, buildings or structures.

- Do not fly in adverse weather conditions such as in high winds or during times of reduced visibility.

- Do not fly near or over sensitive infrastructure or property such as power stations and areas where rescue and/or emergency operations are in force.