

**European Civil Aviation Conference**

# ECAC

**ECAC/JAA  
Programme for  
Safety Assessment  
of Foreign Aircraft**

**- SAFA -**

**Report 1996/1998**





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Programme for  
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**-SAFA-**

**Report  
(01/07/96 to 31/12/98)**



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# 1. Introduction

In aviation, safety is paramount. Safety oversight is an important means of ensuring application of the global Standards and Recommended Practices of ICAO.

Over the past number of years, a number of initiatives have been taken in this field:

- In 1992, the United States Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) launched its International Aviation Assessment (IASA) programme. Taking a top-down approach, IASA focused on a country's, and not on an individual air carrier's, ability to adhere to the international Standards and Recommended Practices established by ICAO. The programme was limited to countries with air carriers providing, or wishing to engage in the operation of, international air services to/from the United States.
- In 1996, ICAO began a voluntary programme of assessments of national authorities. As a result of decisions taken during the 32nd Session of the Assembly in 1998, the ICAO programme is now operating on a universal, transparent and mandatory basis. A top-down approach is used, concentrating on systematic auditing and monitoring of the ability of individual States to conform to the safety-related Standards and Recommended Practices of the Organization.
- In 1996, ECAC launched its SAFA (Safety Assessment of Foreign Aircraft) programme, as a complement to the ICAO audits. The SAFA programme is based on a bottom-up approach, taking as its starting point ramp inspections of airlines landing in ECAC States, and progressing in further steps to involvement of the State of registry where circumstances so require.

## 2. *Main Features of SAFA*

The main features of SAFA are:

- Its application by all 37 ECAC Member States, including the sharing of information between the regulatory authorities, through a centralized database.
- Its bottom-up approach: the core of the programme is built around ramp inspections of aircraft.
- Its non-discriminatory nature — it applies to aircraft from ECAC and non-ECAC States.

The principles of the programme are simple: in each ECAC State, foreign aircraft (ECAC or non-ECAC) can be subject to a ramp inspection, chiefly concerned with the aircraft's documents and its crew, the apparent state of the aircraft and the presence and condition of mandatory cabin equipment. The references for these inspections are the Standards of ICAO Annexes 1, 6 and 8.

These checks are carried out following a procedure which is common to all ECAC Member States, and are then the subject of reports which also follow a common format. In the case of significant irregularities, the operator and the appropriate authority are contacted in order to examine the corrective measures to be taken not only with regard to the aircraft inspected, but also with regard to other aircraft which could be concerned, in the case of an irregularity which is of a generic nature. All the reports, as well as supplementary information (for example a list of actions undertaken and finalized following an inspection) are centralized in computer form by the JAA (Joint Aviation Authorities).

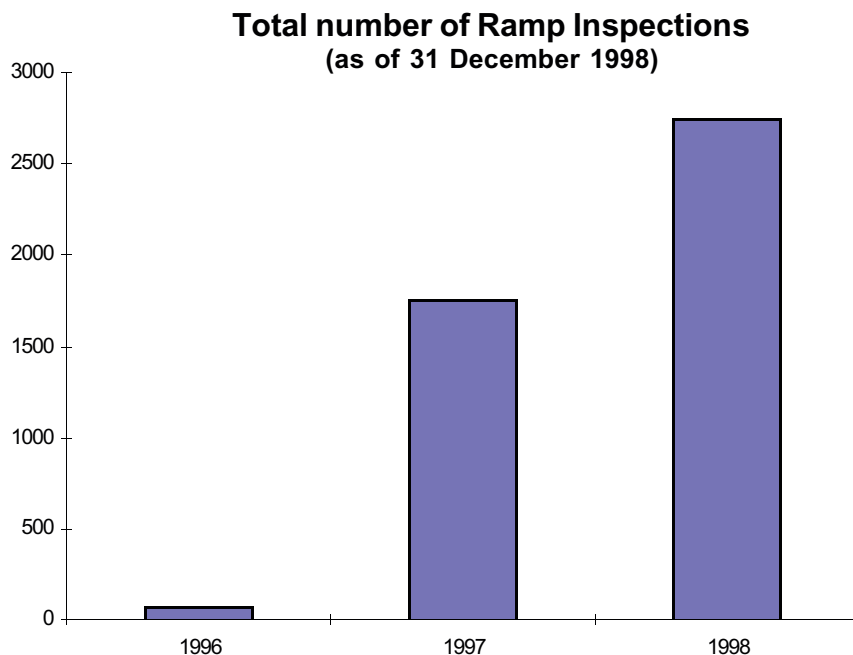
The present report presents the concrete results of the programme in terms of inspections and findings from the beginning of the programme up to 31 December 1998.

While good progress has been made in establishing the programme, improvements and refinements are being introduced on a constant basis.

It is to be noted that SAFA ramp inspections are by their nature on-the-spot assessments, which cannot substitute for the safety oversight responsibilities of the State of Registry. The ramp inspections serve as pointers, but they are not intended to and they cannot guarantee the airworthiness of a particular aircraft.

### 3. *Data Collection*

As of 31 December 1998, a total of 4569 reports have been received from 28 States. This shows a globally satisfactory figure, but with substantial variations from one State to another. These variations can in some cases be explained by differences in the way inspections are carried out. Some States perform less numerous, but more “targeted” inspections, with more comprehensive and detailed ramp inspections gathering large amounts of information. There are also differences in the filing of reports; some States submit reports on all inspections, others only when deficiencies are found.



The total number of ramp inspections performed in 1998 was 2745.

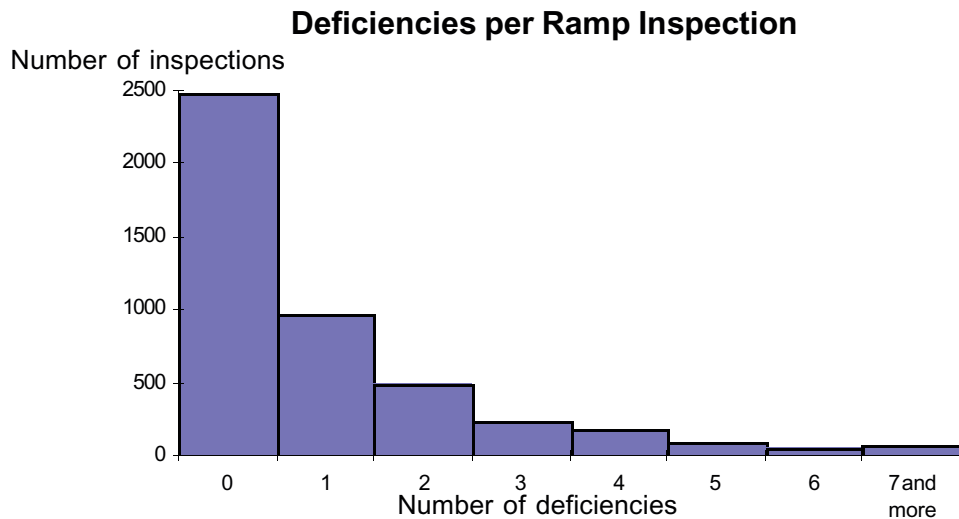
The following table shows the proportions of ramp inspections conducted on aircraft from ECAC and non-ECAC States:

	1996	1997	1998	Average
ECAC	49%	58%	58%	<b>58%</b>
Non ECAC	51%	42%	42%	<b>42%</b>

## 4. Main Findings

### General

A significant number of aircraft inspected have shown one or more deficiencies. Although it is too early to draw firm conclusions, the evolution of this indicator over time will provide a useful measure of the efficiency of the SAFA programme and the level of operators' compliance with safety regulations. The fact that deficiencies are found does not, in the great majority of cases, mean that basic safety is jeopardized. Where serious deficiencies are identified, remedial action is insisted upon before an aircraft may resume operations.



### Occurrences of Deficiencies in Specific Areas

SAFA inspections primarily focus on three areas — the flight deck, cabin safety measures and general aircraft condition, including stowage of cargo.

The ramp inspection records allow us to identify the frequency at which examples of non-compliance with ICAO Standards are found. The tables in the Appendix show the more frequent problems reported by ramp inspectors in the three areas.

## **Flight Deck (see table page 11)**

The more significant deficiencies found are:

- The non-validity of flight crew licences
- The absence of a noise certificate on board
- The absence of required manuals on board, or such manuals being out-of-date
- Deficiencies in the calculation of load distributions.

## **Cabin/Safety (see table page 12)**

The most significant findings relate to emergency exits: the emergency exit path marking is often found partly inoperative. Access to emergency exits is sometimes impeded by seats.

Other frequent problems are:

- Insufficient medical kits
- Safety instructions not in appropriate quantity
- Life jackets expired or not in sufficient quantity.

## **Aircraft Condition/Cargo (see table page 13)**

The most frequently occurring findings concern the external condition of the aircraft, even if many of the findings (such as dirty airframe) are rather inconsequential in safety terms.

More significant issues are :

- Leakage, which is the most frequent reason for grounding an aircraft until remedial measures are taken
- Worn out tyres
- Cargo not adequately secured on board.

## 5. *Actions Taken*

Where required for safety reasons, ramp inspectors may require remedial work to be undertaken before an aircraft is permitted to take-off. In a limited number of cases this has led to the grounding of aircraft for extended periods.

The centralized database provides an important means of:

- enabling States to check information on particular aspects (e.g. similar problems encountered by other States with the same operator);
- enabling JAA to call States' attention to the usefulness of collective ECAC action in particular cases. This, for example, can result in reinforced safety monitoring of a specific operator or of operators from a specific country.

From the outset, the SAFA programme has been tied closely to the ICAO Safety Oversight Programme (SOP). The need for such a link was seen as being most useful in situations where follow-through to ramp inspections lead to a conclusion on ECAC's part that an assessment of the safety oversight functions of a foreign State is required. A Memorandum of Understanding was concluded between ECAC and ICAO to facilitate this process.

As a result of decisions taken at the 32nd Session of the ICAO Assembly in September/October 1998, the SOP is being transformed into a universal mandatory and transparent programme. This has necessitated some revisions in the ECAC/ICAO MOU even if the underlying principles of the SAFA activity complementing the ICAO programme will remain.

Moves are in hand within the European Community to introduce a measure providing for safety assessment of third-country aircraft. Pending enactment of the necessary legislation, practical effect is being given to the EC measures through the SAFA programme.

## 6. *Enhancing the Programme*

The SAFA programme is supported by a National Co-ordinator in each ECAC country. They work under the general supervision of a Steering Committee which reports regularly, through the Focal Point for Safety Matters, to meetings of the Directors General of Civil Aviation of ECAC Member States.

Improvements to the programme are constantly being sought, covering items such as:

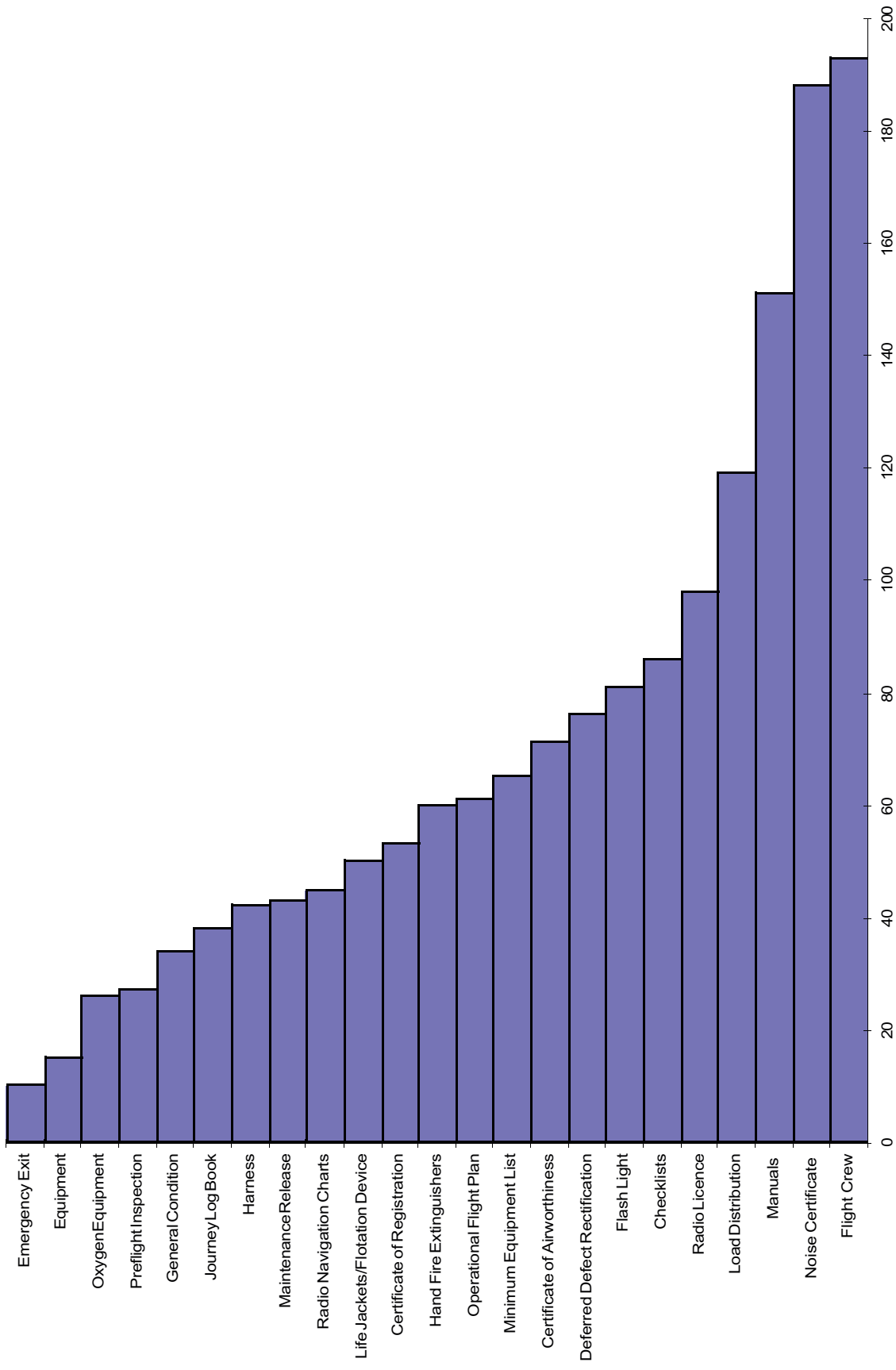
- training ramp inspectors to a common syllabus;
- standardizing the actions to be taken in respect of specific deficiencies identified during ramp inspections; and
- defining mechanisms that will trigger high-level intervention with operators and/or regulatory authorities.

Plans already in hand to establish an on-line database between ECAC States and JAA headquarters will significantly enhance the working of the programme.

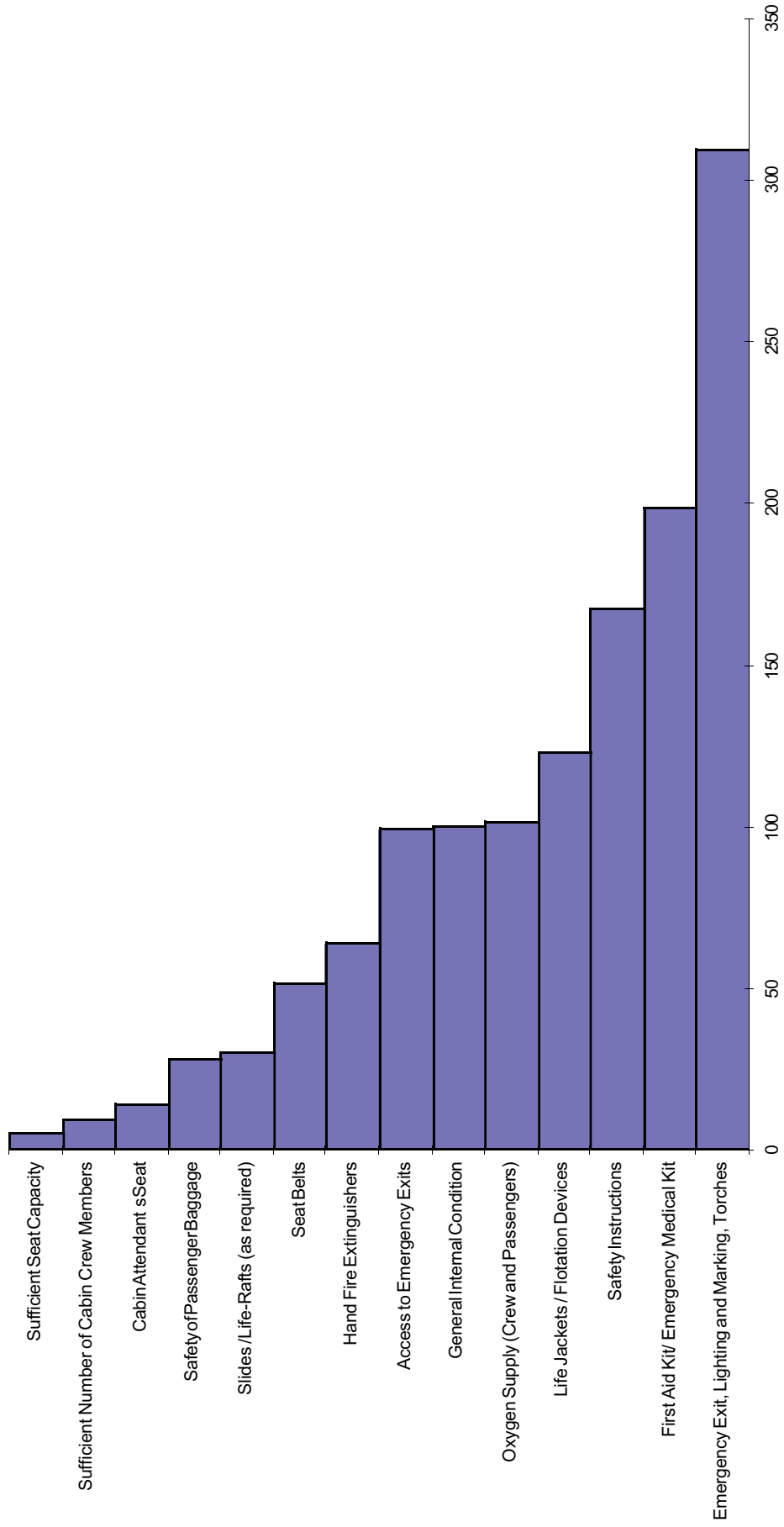
## *7. Appendix*

### **Tables**

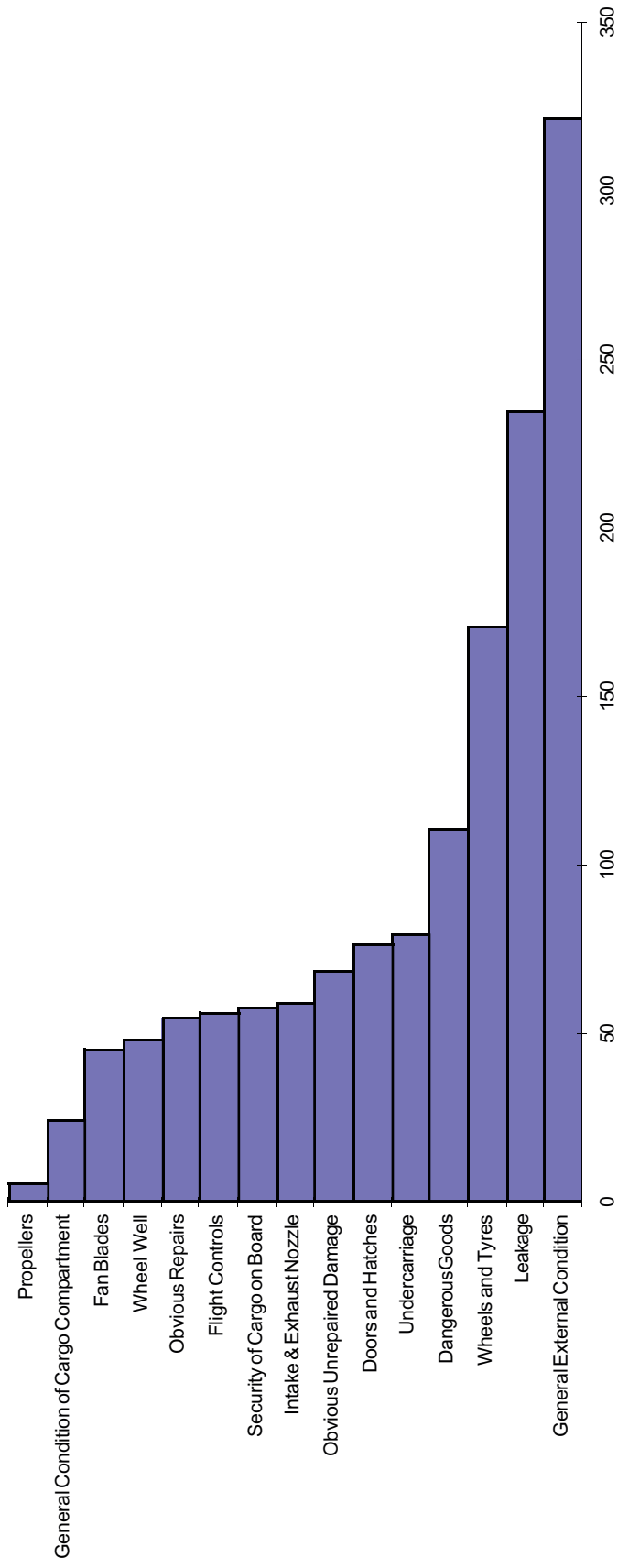
# Flight Deck: Most Frequent Findings



**Cabin / Safety: Most Frequent Findings**



## Aircraft Condition & Cargo: Most Frequent Findings



The European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) is an intergovernmental organization established in 1955. Its objective is to promote the continued development of a safe, efficient and sustainable European air transport system.

ECAC is composed of the following 37 Member States:

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Austria  
Belgium  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland

France  
Germany  
Greece  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Italy  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Malta

Moldova  
Monaco  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
Slovak Republic  
Slovenia  
Spain  
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Yugoslav Republic  
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Turkey  
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