The International Standards for Business Aviation Handling (IS-BAH)

Implemented on July 1, 2014, the International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling (IS-BAH) is designed to promote use of industry best practices blended through a progressive Safety Management System (SMS) for Fixed Based Operations (FBO) and Business Aircraft Handling Agencies (BAHA). The IS-BAH follows the long established structure of the International Standard for Business Aircraft Operations (IS-BAO) Program and incorporates the NATA Safety 1st Ground Audit Program.

In the current regulatory framework, ground handling safety is a shared responsibility between operators and airports. Regulations do not require organizations present on the airport to have an operational safety management system or meet minimum safety standards. Complicating this task is the fact that the ground handling area lacks standardised oversight and harmonised requirements for ground operations procedures, processes and general oversight when these activities are outsourced. Changes to Ground-handling legislation are intended to improve the quality and efficiency of ground-handling services.

The proposals strengthen the role of airports as the "ground co-ordinator" with overall responsibility for the coordination of ground-handling services at an airport. They provide airports with a set of new tools to do this, for example, to require minimum quality standards to be respected by all ground-handlers at their airport.

More than 700 business aviation operators in 35 countries are currently IS-BAO registered, which continues to improve their safety risk profile and operating effectiveness and efficiency. These business aviation flight operations, as part of their SMS requirements, seek verification of the level of proficiency of the handling of their business aircraft. IS-BAH provides a means of conformity to those requirements.

The IS-BAH features at its core a safety management system (SMS) developed by ICAO and other operations-critical industries. It leads the operator from establishment of beginning principles to a sustainable SMS and operations program to a performance-based, risk averse culture for both large and small FBO/BAHA’s. As one global industry code of best practices, IS-BAH will provide standardization to handlers and operators around the world to meet the proposed changes to SMS requirements.

Conforming to these standards and recommended practices is voluntary and may be self-administered. However, recognition for implementation of and conformance to the standards is available via a third party auditing process that results in an IBAC certificate of registration.
The IS-BAH aims to offer the following benefits:

- Safer ground operations, fewer accidents and injuries;
- Promotion of ‘Safest Optimum Practice’ ground handling procedures and Improved safety oversight;
  - Enhanced understanding of high risk areas within scope of ground activities;
  - Reduced injury and ground damage costs;
- Elimination of redundant audits from operators – one IS-BAH audit in place of many operator audits;
- Uniform audit process and harmonised industry standards.

Following a successful launch event in Paris this summer the program continues to develop a series of workshop events to assist handlers with their IS-BAH implementation efforts along with providing a practical approach to managing an SMS based on ICAO principles. Separate workshops also provide an ongoing education program for IS-BAH Auditors to conduct third party IS-BAH Registration Audits and Internal Auditors to conduct Internal Evaluations, and provide essential training for anyone interested in validating SMS performance.

Further information can be found at - http://www.ibac.org/is_bah