



RWANDA
CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

ADVISORY CIRCULAR **RCAA-AC-SSP-26-002**

VOLUNTARY REPORTING SYSTEM (VRS)

Purpose:

- A. This Advisory Circular provides guidance on the Voluntary Reporting System (VRS) established by the Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority (RCAA) as part of Rwanda's State Safety Programme (SSP), in accordance with RCARs Part 30, ICAO Annex 19 – Safety Management, and the ICAO Safety Management Manual (Doc 9859).**
- B. The VRS provides a complementary means for aviation personnel and other relevant stakeholders to voluntarily report hazards, safety concerns, unsafe conditions, and other safety-related information that may not be captured through the mandatory occurrence reporting system, SafetyCore. The information collected through the VRS is intended to complement mandatory occurrence data and enhance RCAA's ability to identify hazards, emerging risks and systemic safety issues.**
- C. The VRS is based on the principles of Just Culture, confidentiality and appropriate protection of safety information. Reports are handled in accordance with applicable requirements for the protection of safety data and information, and individuals are encouraged to provide safety information in good faith without fear of inappropriate punitive action, thereby supporting the continued availability of safety information necessary for effective safety management.**

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SECTION 1 GENERAL

1.1 Status of this Advisory Circular

This is an original issuance (1/2026) of this AC.

1.2 Background

This Advisory Circular (AC) describes the Voluntary Reporting System (VRS) established by the Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority (RCAA) in accordance with ICAO Annex 19 – Safety Management and the ICAO Safety Management Manual (Doc 9859). The VRS provides an additional channel through which aviation industry stakeholders may report safety hazards, concerns, and other safety-related information that may not be captured through mandatory reporting system.

In order for service providers to identify safety hazards, control associated safety risks, and accurately measure the performance of their Safety Management System (SMS), effective reporting of safety occurrences is critical. Applicable regulations already require mandatory reporting of certain safety occurrences by service providers and safety-critical personnel through the Mandatory Reporting System (SafetyCore). A reporting culture that supports effective hazard identification, collaborative analysis, and acceptable risk mitigation is a key component of these processes.

For RCAA to effectively manage aviation safety and determine an Acceptable Level of Safety Performance relevant to each service provider and aviation activity, there must be a continuous flow of safety information from service providers and their personnel. There must therefore be a deliberate mechanism to encourage service providers and personnel to voluntarily report aviation safety hazards, concerns, and occurrences that fall outside mandatory reporting requirements, without fear of recrimination.

The VRS is developed to facilitate and guarantee this free and continuous flow of safety information. It operates under the principles of Just Culture, and complements – rather than replaces – SafetyCore.

1.3 Applicability

This AC applies to all air operators, air navigation service providers (ANSPs), maintenance organizations, aerodrome operators, approved training organizations, aviation personnel, and any other person who wishes to submit a voluntary report on an aviation safety hazard, concern, or occurrence in Rwanda that is not subject to mandatory reporting through SafetyCore.

1.4 Related Regulations

The following regulations are directly applicable to the guidance contained in this advisory circular—

- Rwanda Civil Aviation Regulations (RCARs) Part 30: Safety Management;

1.5 Related Reading Material

For further information on this topic, individuals, organizations and other entities are invited to consult the following publications:

- ICAO Annex 19, Safety Management;
- ICAO Doc 9859, Safety Management Manual (SMM);
- ICAO Doc 10159, Safety Intelligence Manual.

1.6 Definitions & Acronyms

The following definitions apply to this advisory circular:

1. **Authority.** The Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority.
2. **Voluntary safety report.** A report submitted freely by an individual to draw attention to an actual or potential aviation safety hazard, without being formally required to do so.
3. **Hazard.** A condition or an object with the potential to cause or contribute to an aircraft incident or accident.
4. **Just Culture.** An environment in which people are encouraged, and even rewarded, for providing safety-related information, and are not punished for actions, omissions, or decisions taken in line with their experience and training.
5. **State Safety Programme (SSP).** An integrated set of laws, regulations, policies, objectives, processes, procedures and activities aimed at managing safety, at the State level.
6. **Safety Management System (SMS).** A systematic approach to managing safety, including the necessary organizational structures, accountability, responsibilities, policies and procedures.

1.7 Acronyms

The following acronyms are used in this advisory circular:

- AC – Advisory Circular
- ICAO – International Civil Aviation Organization
- RCAA – Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority
- RCAR – Rwanda Civil Aviation Regulations
- SMM – Safety Management Manual
- SMS – Safety Management System
- SSP – State Safety Programme
- VRS – Voluntary Reporting System

SECTION 2 INTRODUCTION & GENERAL CONCEPTS

2.1 How is this AC Organized

This AC is organized into the following sections:

- Section 1 – General: sets out the status, background, applicability, related regulations and reading material, and definitions and acronyms used in this AC.
- Section 2 – Introduction & General Concepts: explains how this AC is organized and who should use it.
- Section 3 – System Description: describes the objective and scope of the VRS, who can make a report, when and how to make one, and the step-by-step procedure for submitting a report through the RCAA VRS portal.
- Section 4 – Processing of Voluntary Reports: describes how RCAA processes voluntary reports, provides feedback to the aviation community, and how to contact the VRS Administrator.

2.2 Who Should Use This AC

This AC should be used by :

- Flight and cabin crew members,
- Air traffic controllers,
- Licensed aircraft engineers,
- Technicians and mechanics,
- Employees of maintenance, design and manufacturing organizations,
- Aerodrome ground handling operators and employees,
- General aviation personnel,
- Approved training organizations, and any other person who becomes aware of a situation that could affect aviation safety.

The full list of persons who can make a voluntary report is set out at paragraph 3.3.

SECTION 3 SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

3.1 Objective of the Reporting System

The key objective of the VRS is to enhance aviation safety through the collection of reports on actual or potential safety hazards, concerns, and deficiencies that would otherwise not be captured through mandatory reporting channels. The VRS allows for the submission of information related to observed hazards or inadvertent errors without an associated legal or administrative requirement to do so.

Relationship to Mandatory Reporting (SafetyCore)

The Voluntary Reporting System (VRS) does not replace or supersede the Mandatory Occurrence Reporting System (SafetyCore). Occurrences that meet the applicable mandatory reporting requirements, including those specified under the relevant mandatory occurrence reporting regulations, shall continue to be reported through SafetyCore in accordance with the applicable requirements.

The VRS complements SafetyCore by providing an additional reporting mechanism for aviation safety hazards, concerns, and other safety-related information that may not be subject to mandatory reporting requirements. The two systems therefore operate in a complementary manner to support the effective identification, collection, assessment, and management of aviation safety information.

Reporters are also encouraged to make use of their organization's internal SMS voluntary reporting system where applicable, unless they have no access to such a system or the hazard is deemed beyond the scope of their organization's purview.

Reports made in good faith through the VRS are handled confidentially by the SSP Department. Details that could lead to the identification of the reporter will be removed before any information derived from a report is shared with a third party.

3.2 Scope of Aviation Sectors / Areas Covered

The VRS covers, but is in no way limited to, the following areas:

3.2.1 Flight Operations:

- i) Departure / en-route / approach and landing
- ii) Aircraft cabin operations
- iii) Aircraft proximity events
- iv) Weight and balance, and performance

3.2.2 Aerodrome Operations:

- i) Aircraft ground operations
- ii) Movement on the aerodrome
- iii) Fuelling operations
- iv) Aerodrome conditions or services
- v) Cargo loading

3.2.3 Air Traffic Management:

- i) ATC operations
- ii) ATC equipment and navigation aids
- iii) Crew and ATC communications

3.2.4 Aircraft Maintenance:

Aircraft, engine, and component maintenance and repair activities.

3.2.5 Approved Training Organizations:

Training activities involving flight operations.

3.2.6 Miscellaneous:

Passenger handling operations related to safety, and other safety-related matters not elsewhere classified.

3.3 Who Can Make a Voluntary Report?

The VRS is open to any of the following, and any other person who becomes aware of a situation that could affect aviation safety:

- a. Flight and cabin crew members
- b. Air traffic controllers
- c. Licensed aircraft engineers, technicians, or mechanics
- d. Employees of maintenance, design, and manufacturing organizations
- e. Aerodrome ground handling operators
- f. Aerodrome employees
- g. General aviation personnel
- h. Any aviation service provider, approved training organization, or other stakeholder in the aviation industry

3.4 When to Make Such a Report

A voluntary report should be made when:

- a. The reporter wishes for others to learn and benefit from a hazard or occurrence, provided the concern is not already subject to mandatory reporting;
- b. There is no other appropriate reporting procedure or channel available; or
- c. Another reporting procedure or channel has been tried without the issue having been addressed.

3.5 How to Make a Voluntary Report

Voluntary reports may be made by individuals or organizations through the following channel:

RCAA VRS web portal:

https://services.gov.rw/jw/web/userview/voluntaryReportingForm/voluntaryReporting/_/submitReport

(see paragraph 3.6 for the step-by-step submission procedure);

3.6 Steps to Submit a Report via the RCAA VRS Portal

The following steps describe how to submit a voluntary report through the RCAA VRS web portal referred to in paragraph 3.5(a)

Step 1. Access the portal. Open any web browser and go to the RCAA VRS portal at <https://services.gov.rw/jw/web/userview/voluntaryReportingForm/voluntaryReporting/submitReport>.

No login or account is required; the form is accessible to visitors.

Step 2. Select the report category. On the Voluntary Report – Event Information form, select “Aviation Safety” under “This report is related to.” Occurrences subject to mandatory reporting (see paragraph 3.1) should instead be reported through SafetyCore.

Step 3. Complete the Event Information fields. All fields marked with a red star (*) are mandatory and must be completed before the report can be submitted. The table below explains each field.

Field	Mandatory	Guidance
This report is related to	Yes	Select “Aviation Safety.” Mandatory-reportable occurrences (e.g. runway incursions) are reported through SafetyCore, not the VRS.
Event Date & Time	Yes	Enter the date and time the event occurred, using the date/time picker.
Event Location	Yes	Enter the location of the event, e.g. an airport ICAO code such as HRYR, or a specific facility or area.
Description / Observation	Yes	Describe what happened factually and in as much detail as possible.
Operator/ Organization	No	The airline, operator, or organisation involved, if applicable.
Unit/Department	No	The reporter's unit or department, if applicable.
Flight Number	No	The flight number involved, if applicable. Enter “N/A” if not applicable.
Type of Aircraft	No	The aircraft type involved, if applicable.
Flight From / Flight To	No	The origin and destination of the flight, if applicable.

Step 4. Indicate whether feedback is required. Under “Feedback Required,” select “Yes” to receive follow-up on the outcome of the report and provide contact details, including a mandatory email address; or select “No” to submit without providing contact details. Note that ‘confidential’ does not mean ‘anonymous’ – see paragraph 3.1.

Step 5. Submit the report. Once all required fields and any optional information are complete, select Submit. A confirmation message, “Process Started – Process

started successfully,” confirms that the report has been received and that processing by the SSP Department has begun, as described in Section 4.

SECTION 4 PROCESSING OF VOLUNTARY REPORTS

4.1 How Reports Are Processed

The VRS protects the identity of reporters. Reports are reviewed and validated by the Manager SSP or a designated alternate, who may contact the reporter for clarification or additional information. Once the information is confirmed as complete and coherent, it is de-identified before being shared with any third party. The SSP Department aims to complete processing within ten (10) working days where no further information is required.

4.2 Feedback to the Aviation Community

Relevant de-identified reports and extracts may be shared with the aviation community so that stakeholders can learn from the experiences reported. Relevant organizations and parties may also use this information to review their policies and plan improvements.

Where the content of a voluntary report suggests a situation that poses an immediate or urgent threat to aviation safety, the report will be handled with priority and referred, after de-identification, to the relevant organizations as soon as possible so that necessary safety action can be taken.

4.3 Contacting the VRS Administrator

Air navigation service providers, Air operators, maintenance organizations, aerodrome operators, approved training organizations, and aviation personnel are welcome to contact RCAA to enquire about the VRS, or to request a preliminary discussion with the SSP Department before making a report.

All enquiries regarding the VRS should be directed to RCAA SSP Department on Email: ssp@caa.gov.rw

End of Advisory Circular