

Air Transportation Oversight System (ATOS)

The FAA designed the system as a surveillance plan to prevent accidents by examining trends and correcting problems before an accident occurs. The program began with the major U.S. carriers and will eventually include all the U.S. airlines. Those not currently affected by the regulation should have already begun preparations to be in compliance when their time does come.

Principals in *AOS* were involved in the early development of ATOS in field applications and helped to train FAA Inspectors in the ATOS inspection process. This involvement combined with the years of operational experience in airline operations uniquely positions *AOS* to assist in preparation for an ATOS inspection, or in the creation of a new enterprise that will be subject to the ATOS requirement

The new certification process is guided by the FAA Certification, Standardization and Evaluation Team (CSET). The process certifies the Air Carrier's system as a whole, not as separate departments or divisions, using a structured, safety driven approach. The references and guidance used by the CSET is contained in the Certification Process Document (CPD) which serves as an automated checklist for guidance and direction during the inspection and as a data base during evaluation. It places requirements on the airlines to have no weak areas and no short cuts taken in seeking excellence in safety and viability. No longer can the emphasis be on certain items at the expense of safety and viability. This will have a major impact on operating philosophies at some airlines.

The new process offers many opportunities for discovery and correction of seemingly small unrelated problems that when taken together constitute a significant threat to safety. The process offers early opportunities to institute Best Business Practices that not only enhance safety but will make the airline more cost effective and therefore more competitive. The result of continued inability to pass the inspection will result in an exit from the industry

The ATOS process is a reality and should be approached as a positive set of guide lines and challenges that can help define the way a successful, competitive airline operates. Understanding the process and the goals can only lead to an easier transition to ATOS oversight and consistent reliability.