

Nieuwsbrief 2021-03

## Nieuwsbrief DTO

### Bijlage I – Threat and Error Management

#### **PRINCIPLES OF THREAT AND ERROR MANAGEMENT**

One model that explains the principles of threat and error management is the TEM model.

1) The components of the TEM model:

There are three basic components in the TEM model, from the perspective of flight crews: threats, errors and undesired aircraft states. The model proposes that threats and errors are part of everyday aviation operations that must be managed by flight crews, since both threats and errors carry the potential to generate undesired aircraft states. Flight crews must also manage undesired aircraft states, since they carry the potential for unsafe outcomes. Undesired state management is an essential component of the TEM model, as important as threat and error management. Undesired aircraft state management largely represents the last opportunity to avoid an unsafe outcome and thus maintain safety margins in flight operations.

2) Threats:

- a. Threats are defined as events or errors that occur beyond the influence of the flight crew, increase operational complexity, and which must be managed to maintain the margins of safety. During typical flight operations, flight crews have to manage various contextual complexities. Such complexities would include, for example, dealing with adverse meteorological conditions, airports surrounded by high mountains, congested airspace, aircraft malfunctions, errors committed by other people outside of the cockpit, such as air traffic controllers, flight attendants or maintenance workers, and so forth. The TEM model considers these complexities as threats because they all have the potential to negatively affect flight operations by reducing margins of safety;
- b. Some threats can be anticipated, since they are expected or known to the flight crew. For example, flight crews can anticipate the consequences of a thunderstorm by briefing their response in advance, or prepare for a congested airport by making sure they keep a watchful eye on other aircraft as they execute the approach;
- c. Some threats can occur unexpectedly, such as an in-flight aircraft malfunction that happens suddenly and without warning. In this case, flight crews must apply skills and knowledge acquired through training and operational experience;
- d. Lastly, some threats may not be directly obvious to, or observable by, flight crews immersed in the operational context, and may need to be uncovered by safety analysis. These are considered latent threats. Examples of latent threats include equipment design issues, optical illusions, or shortened turnaround schedules;



- e. Regardless of whether threats are expected, unexpected, or latent, one measure of the effectiveness of a flight crew's ability to manage threats is whether threats are detected with the necessary anticipation to enable the flight crew to respond to them through deployment of appropriate countermeasures;
- f. Threat management is a building block to error management and undesired aircraft state management. Although the threat-error linkage is not necessarily straightforward, and although it may not be always possible to establish a linear relationship, or one-to-one mapping between threats, errors and undesired states, archival data demonstrates that mismanaged threats are normally linked to flight crew errors, which in turn are often linked to undesired aircraft states. Threat management provides the most proactive option to maintain margins of safety in flight operations, by voiding safety-compromising situations at their roots. As threat managers, flight crews are the last line of defence to keep threats from impacting flight operations;
- g. Table 1 presents examples of threats, grouped under two basic categories derived from the TEM Model. Environmental threats occur due to the environment in which flight operations take place. Some environmental threats can be planned for and some will arise spontaneously, but they all have to be managed by flight crews in real time. Organisational threats, on the other hand, can be controlled (for example removed or, at least, minimised) at source by aviation organisations. Organisational threats are usually latent in nature. Flight crews still remain the last line of defence, but there are earlier opportunities for these threats to be mitigated by aviation organisations themselves.

Environmental threats	Organisational threats
(A) weather: thunderstorms, turbulence, icing, wind shear, cross or tailwind, very low or high temperatures;	(A) operational pressure: delays, late arrivals or equipment changes;
(B) ATC: traffic congestion, ACAS RA/TA, ATC command, ATC error, ATC language difficulty, ATC non-standard phraseology, ATC runway change, ATIS communication or units of measurement (QFE/meters);	(B) aircraft: aircraft malfunction, automation event or anomaly, MEL/CDL;
(C) airport: contaminated or short runway; contaminated taxiway, lack of, confusing, faded signage, markings, birds, aids unserviceable, complex surface navigation procedures or airport constructions;	(C) cabin: flight attendant error, cabin event distraction, interruption, cabin door security;
(D) terrain: high ground, slope, lack of references or 'black hole';	(D) maintenance: maintenance event or error;
(E) other: similar call-signs.	(E) ground: ground-handling event, de-icing or ground crew error;
	(F) dispatch: dispatch paperwork event or error;
	(G) documentation: manual error or chart error;
	(H) other: crew scheduling event.

Table 1. Examples of threats (list is not exhaustive)

### 3) Errors:

- a. Errors are defined actions or inactions by the flight crew that lead to deviations from organisational or flight crew intentions or expectations. Unmanaged or mismanaged errors frequently lead to undesired aircraft states. Errors in the



operational context thus tend to reduce the margins of safety and increase the probability of adverse events;

- b. Errors can be spontaneous (for example without direct linkage to specific, obvious threats), linked to threats, or part of an error chain. Examples of errors would include the inability to maintain stabilised approach parameters, executing a wrong automation mode, failing to give a required callout, or misinterpreting an ATC clearance;
- c. Regardless of the type of error, an error's effect on safety depends on whether the flight crew detects and responds to the error before it leads to an undesired aircraft state and to a potential unsafe outcome. This is why one of the objectives of TEM is to understand error management (for example detection and response), rather than to solely focus on error causality (for example causation and commission). From the safety perspective, operational errors that are timely detected and promptly responded to (for example properly managed), errors that do not lead to undesired aircraft states, do not reduce margins of safety in flight operations, and thus become operationally inconsequential. In addition to its safety value, proper error management represents an example of successful human performance, presenting both learning and training value;
- d. Capturing how errors are managed is then as important, if not more, as capturing the prevalence of different types of error. It is of interest to capture if and when errors are detected and by whom, the response(s) upon detecting errors, and the outcome of errors. Some errors are quickly detected and resolved, thus becoming operationally inconsequential, while others go undetected or are mismanaged. A mismanaged error is defined as an error that is linked to or induces an additional error or undesired aircraft state;
- e. Table 2 presents examples of errors, grouped under three basic categories derived from the TEM model. In the TEM concept, errors have to be 'observable' and therefore, the TEM model uses the 'primary interaction' as the point of reference for defining the error categories;
- f. The TEM model classifies errors based upon the primary interaction of the pilot or flight crew at the moment the error is committed. Thus, in order to be classified as aircraft handling error, the pilot or flight crew must be interacting with the aircraft (for example through its controls, automation or systems). In order to be classified as procedural error, the pilot or flight crew must be interacting with a procedure (for example checklists; SOPs; etc.). In order to be classified as communication error, the pilot or flight crew must be interacting with people (ATC, ground crew, other crewmembers, etc.);
- g. Aircraft handling errors, procedural errors and communication errors may be unintentional or involve intentional non-compliance. Similarly, proficiency considerations (for example skill or knowledge deficiencies, training system deficiencies) may underlie all three categories of error. In order to keep the approach simple and avoid confusion, the TEM model does not consider intentional noncompliance and proficiency as separate categories of error, but rather as sub-sets of the three major categories of error.



<b>Aircraft handling errors</b>	(A) manual handling, flight controls: vertical, lateral or speed deviations, incorrect flaps or speed brakes, thrust reverser or power settings; (B) automation: incorrect altitude, speed, heading, auto throttle settings, incorrect mode executed or incorrect entries; (C) systems, radio, instruments: incorrect packs, incorrect anti-icing, incorrect altimeter, incorrect fuel switches settings, incorrect speed bug or incorrect radio frequency dialled; (D) ground navigation: attempting to turn down wrong taxiway or runway, taxi too fast, failure to hold short or missed taxiway or runway.
<b>Procedural errors</b>	(A) SOPs: failure to cross-verify automation inputs; (B) checklists: wrong challenge and response; items missed, checklist performed late or at the wrong time; (C) callouts: omitted or incorrect callouts; (D) briefings: omitted briefings; items missed; (E) documentation: wrong weight and balance, fuel information, ATIS, or clearance information recorded, misinterpreted items on paperwork; incorrect logbook entries or incorrect application of MEL procedures.
<b>Communication errors</b>	(A) crew to external: missed calls, misinterpretations of instructions, incorrect read-back, wrong clearance, taxiway, gate or runway communicated; (B) pilot to pilot: within crew miscommunication or mis-interpretation.

Table 2. Examples of errors (list is not exhaustive)

#### 4) Undesired aircraft states:

- a. Undesired aircraft states are flight crew-induced aircraft position or speed deviations, misapplication of flight controls, or incorrect systems configuration, associated with a reduction in margins of safety. Undesired aircraft states that result from ineffective threat or error management may lead to compromising situations and reduce margins of safety in flight operations. Often considered at the cusp of becoming an incident or accident, undesired aircraft states must be managed by flight crews;
- b. Examples of undesired aircraft states would include lining up for the incorrect runway during approach to landing, exceeding ATC speed restrictions during an approach, or landing long on a short runway requiring maximum braking. Events such as equipment malfunctions or ATC controller errors can also reduce margins of safety in flight operations, but these would be considered threats;
- c. Undesired states can be managed effectively, restoring margins of safety, or flight crew response(s) can induce an additional error, incident, or accident;
- d. Table 3 presents examples of undesired aircraft states, grouped under three basic categories derived from the TEM model;



<b>Aircraft handling</b>	(A) aircraft control (attitude); (B) vertical, lateral or speed deviations; (C) unnecessary weather penetration; (D) unauthorised airspace penetration; (E) operation outside aircraft limitations; (F) unstable approach; (G) continued landing after unstable approach; (H) long, floated, firm or off-centreline landing.
<b>Ground navigation</b>	(A) proceeding towards wrong taxiway or runway; (B) Wrong taxiway, ramp, gate or hold spot.
<b>Incorrect aircraft configurations</b>	(A) incorrect systems configuration; (B) incorrect flight controls configuration; (C) incorrect automation configuration; (D) incorrect engine configuration; (E) incorrect weight and balance configuration.

Table 3. Examples of undesired aircraft states (list is not exhaustive)

- e. An important learning and training point for flight crews is the timely switching from error management to undesired aircraft state management. An example would be as follows: a flight crew selects a wrong approach in the FMC. The flight crew subsequently identifies the error during a cross-check prior to the FAF. However, instead of using a basic mode (for example heading) or manually flying the desired track, both flight crew members become involved in attempting to reprogram the correct approach prior to reaching the FAF. As a result, the aircraft 'stitches' through the localiser, descends late, and goes into an unstable approach. This would be an example of the flight crew getting 'locked in' to error management, rather than switching to undesired aircraft state management. The use of the TEM model assists in educating flight crews that, when the aircraft is in an undesired state, the basic task of the flight crew is undesired aircraft state management instead of error management. It also illustrates how easy it is to get locked in to the error management phase;
- f. Also from a learning and training perspective, it is important to establish a clear differentiation between undesired aircraft states and outcomes. Undesired aircraft states are transitional states between a normal operational state (for example a stabilised approach) and an outcome. Outcomes, on the other hand, are end states, most notably, reportable occurrences (for example incidents and accidents). An example would be as follows: a stabilised approach (normal operational state) turns into an unstabilised approach (undesired aircraft state) that results in a runway excursion (outcome);
- g. The training and remedial implications of this differentiation are of significance. While at the undesired aircraft state stage, the flight crew has the possibility, through appropriate TEM, of recovering the situation, returning to a normal operational state, thus restoring margins of safety. Once the undesired aircraft state becomes an outcome, recovery of the situation, return to a normal operational state, and restoration of margins of safety is not possible.

#### 5) Countermeasures:

- a. Flight crews must, as part of the normal discharge of their operational duties, employ countermeasures to keep threats, errors and undesired aircraft states from



reducing margins of safety in flight operations. Examples of countermeasures would include checklists, briefings, call-outs and SOPs, as well as personal strategies and tactics. Flight crews dedicate significant amounts of time and energies to the application of countermeasures to ensure margins of safety during flight operations. Empirical observations during training and checking suggest that as much as 70 % of flight crew activities may be countermeasures-related activities.

- b. All countermeasures are necessarily flight crew actions. However, some countermeasures to threats, errors and undesired aircraft states that flight crews employ build upon 'hard' resources provided by the aviation system. These resources are already in place in the system before flight crews report for duty, and are therefore considered as systemic-based countermeasures. The following would be examples of 'hard' resources that flight crews employ as systemic-based countermeasures:
  - i. ACAS;
  - ii. TAWS;
  - iii. SOPs;
  - iv. checklists;
  - v. briefings;
  - vi. training;
  - vii. etc.
- c. Other countermeasures are more directly related to the human contribution to the safety of flight operations. These are personal strategies and tactics, individual and team countermeasures that typically include canvassed skills, knowledge and attitudes developed by human performance training, most notably, by CRM training. There are basically three categories of individual and team countermeasures:
  - i. planning countermeasures: essential for managing anticipated and unexpected threats;
  - ii. execution countermeasures: essential for error detection and error response;
  - iii. review countermeasures: essential for managing the changing conditions of a flight.
- d. Enhanced TEM is the product of the combined use of systemic based and individual and team countermeasures. Table 4 presents detailed examples of individual and team countermeasures. Further guidance on countermeasures can be found in the sample assessment guides for terminal training objectives (PANS-TRG, Chapter 3, Attachment B) as well as in the ICAO manual, Line Operations Safety Audit (LOSA) (Doc 9803).



<b>Planning countermeasures</b>		
SOP briefing	The required briefing was interactive and operationally thorough	(A) Concise, not rushed, and met SOP requirements; (B) Bottom lines were established
Plans stated	Operational plans and decisions were communicated and acknowledged	Shared understanding about plans: 'Everybody on the same page'
Workload assignment	Roles and responsibilities were defined for normal and non-normal situations	Workload assignments were communicated and acknowledged
Contingency management	Crew members developed effective strategies to manage threats to safety	(A) Threats and their consequences were anticipated; (B) Used all available resources to manage threats
<b>Execution countermeasures</b>		
Monitor and cross-check	Crew members actively monitored and cross-checked systems and other crew members	Aircraft position, settings, and crew actions were verified
Workload management	Operational tasks were prioritised and properly managed to handle primary flight duties	(A) Avoided task fixation; (B) Did not allow work overload
Automation management	Automation was properly managed to balance situational and workload requirements	(A) Automation setup was briefed to other members (B) Effective recovery techniques from automation anomalies
<b>Review countermeasures</b>		
Evaluation and modification of plans	Existing plans were reviewed and modified when necessary	Crew decisions and actions were openly analysed to make sure the existing plan was the best plan
Inquiry	Crew members asked questions to investigate and/or clarify current plans of action	Crew members not afraid to express a lack of knowledge: 'Nothing taken for granted' attitude
Assertiveness	Crew members stated critical information or solutions with appropriate persistence	Crew members spoke up without hesitation

**Table 4. Examples of individual and team countermeasures**