



Crisis management focus of IOSH aviation conference

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The way the aviation industry reacts to and bounces back from a crisis was the focus of a conference hosted by IOSH today (Thursday 2 July).



Industry experts gathered at the Imperial War Museum in Duxford, Cambridgeshire, to share with delegates their knowledge and experience of dealing with aviation incidents.

IOSH's Aviation and Aerospace Group hosted the event to highlight best practice and discuss any lessons learnt from high-profile events to have befallen the industry.

Group chair Ross Coppolo said: "The aviation industry will always have to deal with crisis situations by the very means of what we do.

"In the last five years unfortunately there have been hundreds of aviation accidents worldwide, fortunately mostly without serious injuries or deaths. Unfortunately, a series of recent unforeseen tragedies have really brought the issue of crisis management back to the forefront of people's attention.

"No organisation is exempt from a crisis situation so it is imperative that you have the right robust

procedures in place.”

Jeremy Allen of disaster management company, Kenyon International Emergency Services, spoke of the organisation’s work to assist 370 airline clients with their response to major incidents.

He said among the company’s tasks this year had been dealing with the aftermath of the Germanwings plane crash in the French Alps in March, in which 150 people died.

Jeremy said: “Accidents themselves are not predictable but the consequences are.

“It is rare that something happens for the first time. Our job, as a community, is to make sure we continue to look back at case studies and reports and make sure we are learning for the next emergency.”

He added: “Stop trying to react to what has happened and get out there preparing for the things that you know will happen.”

Virgin Atlantic’s Resilience Manager Tiggy Thiagarajah gave delegates an insight into how he and the airline have reacted to crisis situations.

He discussed two emergency landings which have affected Virgin Atlantic flights in recent years, and how the company went about managing the situation, customer care and media coverage.

Tiggy said: “Crises these days are played out very much in full view of the public.

“In crisis management you always have plans but when an actual real event happens you have to be prepared for things to go completely off-piste. One of the things I have learned in crisis management is to expect the unexpected.”

A new airside driving safety training DVD developed by IOSH Aviation and Aerospace Group was also launched at the conference.

The DVD was commissioned by the group to raise awareness of the variety and range of hazards that exist when driving airside.

During its development it received input from industry, the Civil Aviation Authority, the Health and Safety Executive and IOSH members.

Aviation and Aerospace Group committee member Simon Harrison, who led on the project, said: “The airside environment provides diverse hazards not normally a factor elsewhere. The key for us is that minor incidents can lead to catastrophic events.

“A small amount of damage to an aircraft – something that a driver may not think is worth reporting – can lead to a major event, and that is what we are trying to avoid.”

The conference also featured presentations by representatives from aviation dismantling, storage and recovery specialists Air Salvage International Ltd, law firm Holman Fenwick Willan, insurance advocates Flaxmans and motivational speaker Craig Goldblatt.

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Notes for editors

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We set standards, and support, develop and connect our members with resources, guidance, events and training. We're the voice of the profession, and campaign on issues that affect millions of working people.

IOSH was founded in 1945 and is a registered charity with international NGO status.

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