NBAA Mgmt. Guide; Highlights & Best Practices for the Work Place

Marlin Priest, CEO Pioneer Aviation Management
Patrick Delahoussaye, President Pioneer Aviation Management
The *NBAA Management Guide* is an industry how-to manual for business aviation management. Recognized as one of NBAA’s most popular member benefits, this publication assists flight departments with operational, maintenance, administrative and other considerations.

It should be noted that this is not a complete guide for all functions of the flight department; consequently, it does not cover every possible situation faced by business aviation managers. However, the *NBAA Management Guide* does attempt to summarize essential information concerning the operation of a flight department.
The Management Guide covers everything from Administration, Flight Operations, International Operations, to Maintenance Operations. Appendices contain guidance regarding topics ranging from aircraft feasibility study, supplemental lift, to how to respond to an aviation accident. Helpful templates and tables can also be found to aid in such activities as issuing Requests for Proposals, Analysis of RFP’s, or determining the number of pilot and maintenance personnel needed to effectively and efficiently staff a flight department.

The NBAA Maintenance Committee is tasked with revising Section 4, Maintenance Operations, and the applicable appendices and figures. We welcome and appreciate your input and suggestions for improvement.
1.5. Department Staffing Guidelines

Staffing of the aviation department should be a joint effort between the company personnel (or human resources) department and the aviation department manager. The personnel department provides the expertise necessary to ensure compliance with Federal and state employment regulations and conformity with company standards. The aviation department manager has personal knowledge of the unique requirements relating to the Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA's) aviation requirements and skills. Between the two, procedures for recruitment, applications, interviews, reference checks, certification, flight checks and employment can be established.
1.10. Independent Contractors and Contingent Workers

In order to meet demand and manage items such as employee vacation or sick time, many flight departments turn to contingent workers, which include independent contractors or temporary/part-time workers. Contingent arrangements are a valuable resource for many operators that need additional support from pilots, flight attendants and maintenance professionals, but are not looking to make a long-term employment commitment.

When utilizing contingent workers, managers must take steps to make an educated determination as to the proper classification of the worker. For federal tax purposes, a worker is classified as either an employee of the flight department or an independent contractor to the department.
1.10. Independent Contractors and Contingent Workers

If an individual is brought on as an independent contractor, but later found to be an employee, there can be significant negative consequences for the employer. This means that managers must take steps to understand the tax, insurance, and legal ramifications when determining the proper classification of contingent workers.

It is advisable to include corporate legal and HR when making these determinations, as the rules and guidance varies greatly between local, state and federal agencies. NBAA has a number of resources to assist flight department management in determining the proper classification of workers. These include the NBAA Guidebook of Best Practices for Utilizing Independent Contractors, and links to IRS and U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) documentation. One notable USDOL document is Administrator’s Interpretation No. 2015-1-The Application of the Fair Labor Standards Act’s “Suffer or Permit” Standard in the Identification of Employees Who Are Misclassified as Independent Contractors. Also, the USDOL has entered into memoranda of understanding with many of the states and the IRS to investigate and bring enforcement actions against employers who misclassify workers.

Corporate aircraft maintenance involves a level of sophistication that requires a set of policies and procedures for basic administration and operation. NBAA recommends that business aviation departments establish a Maintenance Operations Manual to formalize and document policies and procedures in a single source.
4.2. Purpose of the Business Aviation Maintenance Department

Within the flight department, the maintenance function works as an equal partner with management and flight crew personnel for the success of an organization's flight operations. Maintenance personnel have the direct responsibility of maintaining proper aircraft condition and airworthiness and help provide the proper asset management of the company aircraft. This asset management includes short and long-term operational issues, aircraft improvements, maintenance issues that will affect operational capability, and the aircraft's current and future value.
4.3. Maintenance Department Mission Statement

The aviation department should have an overall mission statement that describes its role for the particular company served.

4.4. Maintenance Department Budget

Typically, maintenance departments are required to have adequate monetary resources for the operating (fiscal) year. The parent company’s budget policies and procedures should be clearly understood and complied with.
4.5. Maintenance Department Organization

Maintenance and flight operations should sit on the same reporting level regardless of the size of the organization. The maintenance department organizational chart establishes a proper balance for the operational needs of both areas and provides the opportunity to work together toward solutions of commonly shared duties and responsibilities without concern for which group has the highest rank.
4.6. Staffing the Maintenance Department

The Management Guide provides guidelines to assist in determining the appropriate number of staff members for a particular maintenance operation. The formula provided may be modified to meet the unique needs or demands of any given company.

4.7. Maintenance Technician Qualifications

Business aviation departments should require that their technicians hold an FAA Airframe and Powerplant license. Criteria for the licensing can be found in Subpart D of FAR Part 65.
4.8. Maintenance Technician Tools

Aircraft maintenance technicians should possess adequate tools to perform normal maintenance tasks. These tasks include the removal and replacement of standard aircraft fasteners such as screws, bolts, nuts and pins. Tools should be of a quality appropriate for the maintenance of aircraft and the prevention of personal injury and equipment damage. Some operations provide company toolboxes and tooling as part of their Quality Assurance or SMS program tool control program.

4.9. Shop Tools and Support Equipment

Performing proper maintenance and ground support requires a flight department to invest in certain equipment. This equipment, along with staffing and facilities, will determine the overall capabilities of the maintenance function.
4.10. Maintenance Technician Training

Training is an essential element of the maintenance function within a corporate flight department.

4.11. Maintenance Technician Work Performance Criteria

A technician’s performance of assigned duties may be viewed from two perspectives: First, from that of the FAA, and second, from that of the company employing the individual.
4.12. Elements of Aircraft Maintenance Activity

- PREFLIGHT INSPECTIONS
- POSTFLIGHT INSPECTIONS
- INSPECTION PROGRAMS
- MANAGEMENT OF THE INSPECTION PROGRAM AND SCHEDULE

4.13. Quality Assurance

The purpose of a quality assurance program is to verify on a continuing basis that the maintenance policies and procedures in use are current and effective, and that the aircraft is consistently returned to service in an airworthy condition. The quality assurance program specifically focuses on maintenance procedures, but it also should coordinate with the organization’s safety management system (SMS).

The need to keep and manage aircraft records is necessary for three distinct purposes:

• FAA regulations require that certain records be maintained.
• During an evaluation of the aircraft, records will validate the current status of the aircraft and reflect its current financial value.
• During maintenance, records will provide for more efficient troubleshooting and corrective action, thus reducing cost.
4.15. Discrepancy Management

The sophistication and complexity of aircraft used in the corporate environment matches that of any other part of the aviation spectrum. Because of this, the expertise and strong teamwork skills of both maintenance department and flight operations personnel are essential for effective resolution of aircraft/system difficulties.

4.16. Outside Maintenance

Occasionally, aircraft will need to visit outside maintenance providers, which may be due to staffing, scope of work, specialized tooling or scheduling convenience. Proper planning for this visit is essential for a budget control, ensuring work is completed in accordance with the appropriate regulations and guidelines, records are complete and correct, and that budgetary management is maintained.
4.18. Maintenance Technician Duty Time

NBAA recommends that its Member Companies develop a policy for limiting maintenance technician duty time. Long duty cycles are a principle cause of both physical and mental fatigue. Physical fatigue can lead to personal injury, and mental fatigue can lead to mistakes.

4.19. Compensation of Maintenance Personnel

NBAA believes that a stable workforce adds great value to the corporate flight department. Aviation professionals are by nature highly motivated and require specialized training. Proper investments made in employees for training, compensation and benefits should aim for employee retention and workforce stability.
4.20. Safety Programs

A primary goal of every maintenance department is to create a safety culture, or safety standard, aimed at reducing the risk exposure to employees and sub-contractors and avoiding unnecessary damage to equipment.
4.21. References for Maintenance Operations

- MANUALS (AMM, IPC, AWD, SIRM, ICA’s, etc.)
- FEDERAL AVIATION REGULATIONS
- ADVISORY CIRCULARS
- ICAO DOCUMENTS
- OTHER FAA DOCUMENTS
  
  FAA Order 8300-10D Airworthiness Inspectors Handbook
  FAA Order 8900.1 Flight Standards Information System (FSIMS)
  SAFO’s