

**DOD REQUIREMENTS OF**  
**CREW RESOURCE**  
**MANAGEMENT**  
**“Is It In There?”**

Over the past years, operations evaluators conducting the on-site surveys of the air carriers in the DOD transportation program, have noticed changes in Crew Resource Management (CRM) training and philosophies; specifically going from a standalone course to embedding it into the overall training curriculum.

The roots of CRM training trace back to workshops sponsored by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in 1978 trying to understand the fundamental causes of air transportation accidents. In parallel, the Air Force’s CRM training program was designed to develop aircrew skills in recognizing and responding to conditions that lead to aircrew error. Additionally, Part 135 and Part 121 air carriers in the DOD Air Transportation Program are held to 32 CFR 861.4(e)(3)(iv) requirements for CRM in their aircrew and captain upgrade training.

According to 32 CFR 861.4 (e)(3)(iv), “crew coordination training that facilitates full cockpit crews training and full crew interaction using standardized procedures and including the principles of Crew Resource Management (CRM) is required.” Additionally, in reference to captain upgrade, part (v) adds, “a selection and training process that considers proven experience, decision making, crew resource management, and response to unusual situations, including stress and pressure, is required.”

Notably, many carriers have implemented improvements within their CRM training. For example, many carriers have introduced threat and error management (TEM) within CRM. As carriers improve and modify their CRM training philosophy, it is imperative that the fundamental, core practices remain focused upon the foundation of crew activities while operating commercial aircraft.

To the positive, a trend is developing implementing principles of CRM within all areas of training; this is good. However, at some companies, this trend has swung almost to the point where there is no definable CRM “block of training” whatsoever. All carriers need to be cautious of this second trend. While 32 CFR does not dictate what CRM must “look” like, the fundamental principles of CRM must still exist to be compliant with the 32 CFR Part 861 requirements. When the CRM is so embedded in the overall course structure that you can’t put your finger on it, it is probably time to bring it or portions of it out so it receives the proper recognition it deserves. We have actually seen a couple companies that have had to separate it out from the mix so that the crews got the real impact of the course. If you look at your training program and have to ask the question “is CRM in there?” or can’t show where the principles of CRM are, it may be time to separate it or parts of it out again.

There are many sources for additional CRM information. In our research, IASA has a very informative article explaining the evolution of CRM in commercial aviation.

([www.iasa.com.au/crm.htm](http://www.iasa.com.au/crm.htm))