



Safety recommendation no. 585

Date of the publication	31.10.2023
Number of the final report	2393
Safety deficit	<p>Several airprox have been observed in class E airspace around Sion aerodrome, particularly within the boundaries of the Sion temporary terminal manoeuvring area (TMA) between aircraft operating under instrument flight rules (IFR) on approach to Sion and those operating under visual flight rules (VFR). Air traffic control has also recognised the entire area as a hotspot.</p> <p>The Sion temporary TMA cannot be activated at short notice via voice radio but instead only after prior publication via Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) und Daily Airspace Bulletin Switzerland (DABS). As a result, approaching and departing IFR traffic must pass through class E airspace where VFR traffic – which is not in contact with air traffic control and which may not be identified by air traffic control or collision warning systems – is expected.</p>
Safety recommendation	<p>The Federal Office of Civil Aviation (FOCA) should, as soon as possible, take appropriate measures to reduce the risk of airprox in the Sion TMA resulting from the presence of IFR traffic in class E airspace, for example by permanently activating the current TMA via NOTAM ('TMA TEMPO') or by establishing a TMA that can be activated at short notice via voice radio if required ('TMA HX').</p>
Addressees	BAZL Bundesamt für Zivilluftfahrt
Stage of the implementation	<p>The Federal Office of Civil Aviation (FOCA) stated the following in its statement of January 29, 2024</p> <p>"Absolute safety cannot be achieved either on the ground or in the air. When assessing safety, the question arises: "How safe is safe enough?" This is a central question of risk management and is defined with risk limits, which enables a uniform assessment of explicit risks. The risk addressed by this safety recommendation was explicitly identified and assessed by the FOCA with the involvement of the relevant stakeholders. This procedure is carried out at the FOCA when a new safety recommendation is issued. It ensures that measures and resources are deployed where necessary for safety. It also checks whether the proposed safety recommendation adequately and sufficiently mitigates the risk. Last but not least, this procedure also prevents availability bias, which can occur in the event of an incident.</p> <p>Together with the relevant stakeholders, the FOCA analyzed the risks in the airspace around Sion independently of the STSB investigation in 2020 and concluded that the risk scenarios examined were at least within the tolerable range (according to the ALARP principle, orange area). In November 2023, the analysis was reviewed both internally and with representatives of Skyguide and Sion Airport. The latest movement figures and incidents were also</p>

taken into account. This review produced a similar result to that of 2020, meaning that no immediate measures were deemed necessary. Due to new planned instrument flight procedures in Sion, an analysis of the airspace structure and a review of the current ATM procedures are planned.

Independently of the final report and this safety recommendation, FOCA therefore intends to carry out a new analysis of the need for changes in the airspace around Sion - albeit not with the same urgency as requested by the STSB. In the FOCA's view, there is a discrepancy between the wording in the safety recommendation "promptly" and the period between the incident and the publication of the report or the safety recommendation.

The FOCA does not consider the prompt implementation of the two proposals to permanently activate the current TMA via NOTAM or by introducing a TMA that can be activated at short notice via radiotelephony if required to be proportionate. As mentioned above, the safety analysis carried out by the FOCA shows no immediate need for action. Moreover, the implementation of a TMA via NOTAM would not be possible until the AIRAC date in March 2025 at the earliest (map relevance). As the TMAs were designed to protect military procedures and not civilian procedures, a public consultation would be necessary. Without the involvement of the stakeholders concerned and sufficient grounds for immediate implementation, there would also be a likelihood of a complaint from the light aviation associations and representatives of the tourism industry in Valais in collaboration with the canton of Valais. This has already been demonstrated by the airspace change proposed by Skyguide in Sion for 2016. These considerations also apply mutatis mutandis to the implementation of an "HX" TMA structure. This measure would also require technical adjustments.

The resources that would be required for a short-term adjustment would jeopardize other airspace adjustments that are currently planned and/or underway. This would not be conducive to the overall Swiss aviation system and not in the spirit of AVISTRAT-CH, which aims to simplify airspace (and ATM procedures), taking all airspace users into account as far as possible. Airspace structures should only be established where this is actually necessary and proportionate. Directive LR 003 Airspace Design Principles CH (ADP CH) already includes this approach.

Work is currently underway on all changes to instrument flight procedures in Sion. It is planned to implement new instrument departure procedures by AIRAC June 2024. The implementation of new instrument approach procedures is planned for March 2027. All ATM and airspace issues will be discussed and addressed by the relevant stakeholders in this project.

Should the safety situation for IFR traffic change and air traffic control identifies risks that appear unacceptable as part of its risk management, air traffic control must take operational measures at short notice to ensure the safety of air traffic even under the current framework conditions.

If there are any changes in the course of the project in Sion, the FOCA will update the STSB accordingly. The FOCA hereby considers safety recommendation no. 585 to be fully implemented and completed."

The STSB takes note of this statement and notes that - according to the above statements by the FOCA - no measures have been taken and implemented to date that would specifically address and reduce

the identified safety deficit. For this reason, the STSB considers the safety recommendation not to have been implemented.

**Investigation report concerning
the safety recommendation**

Rapport de première information
Schlussbericht
Final report
