



CFPA-APFC

Canadian Federal Pilots Association
Association des Pilotes Fédéraux du Canada

For immediate release
19 October 2017

Transport Canada dismisses MPs' concerns about aviation safety

Ottawa – Transport Canada has brushed aside valid concerns of MPs about the safety of flying in Canada in its response to the House of Commons Transport Committee's report on aviation safety, according to the Canadian Federal Pilots Association.

“Rather than addressing the Committee's recommendations and concerns raised by many witnesses in a meaningful way, the response from Transport Canada presents misleading statements that all is well,” said CFPA National Chair Captain Greg McConnell.

During its three-month study the committee of MPs from all parties heard enough troubling testimony about the weak state of aviation safety oversight in Canada that it made 17 sweeping recommendations to bring Canada back into compliance with minimum international safety standards.

Transport Canada was silent on or rejected most of these recommendations, including:

- More on-site inspections – REJECTED – data included in the government's response shows a 9.5% reduction in the number of inspections Transport Canada conducted last year compared to 2014. Of the on-site SMS activities Transport Canada carries out, the vast majority are after an accident or incident. Only a small minority are done before something bad happens, and no plans to increase preventive on-site inspections were announced. Transport Canada boasts about the number of inspections it does but fails to mention that it watered down its inspection process last year to boost its performance metrics.¹
- The Minister invite ICAO to audit Canada's oversight program – REJECTED
Transport Canada rejected this recommendation noting that ICAO will audit Canada in 2020 – 15 years after the last audit and one year after the next election.
- Ensure a properly financed, adequately staffed system of regulatory oversight supported by a properly trained staff – SILENT -- Transport Canada's reliance on simulator-only training of its inspectors has caused the error rate among its own

¹ “The primary objective of this temporary program change is to increase the inspection capacity to meet the 2016/2017 National Oversight Plan by leveraging existing albeit leaner surveillance tools”.

Source: Transport Canada IPB 2016-03 issued on July 29, 2016.

pilots to increase by 200% since deep cuts to department's flying program were made in 2010.

- Transport Canada undertake an air safety review and report back to Parliament – REJECTED.

In its response the government claims Canada is fully compliant with international safety standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), even though ICAO last audited Canada more than a decade ago in 2005. This was when Transport Canada began replacing its program of direct operational oversight of aviation with SMS, a systems-based approach where inspectors examine more paper than airplanes while responsibility for setting safety standards and monitoring safety performance is transferred to the airlines themselves.

The current reality is far different.

An analysis conducted by the CFPA comparing Canada's current oversight programs and practices to the ICAO's minimum safety standards has found Canada fails to meet 8 of 13 minimum requirements.

The response also claims credit for oversight activities Transport Canada doesn't actually deliver, such as medical assessments of pilots. Transport Canada claims to have delivered almost 50,000 of these last year. The fact is that these are delivered by doctors in private practice who have nothing to do with Transport Canada apart from attending a seminar once every four years..

"Without notice to Parliament or the public, Transport Canada has steadily replaced direct operational oversight with systems-based paper audits even though MPs are calling on the department to restore direct oversight," McConnell said.

Transport Canada was quietly contemplating cuts to its oversight program even while the committee was in the middle of its study. For example, Transport Canada is considering handing off to industry near total responsibility for ensuring commercial pilots are competent to do their jobs safely, even those who fly air taxis and other small planes that have the highest accident and fatality rates.

"Right now, aviation safety is missing from the Minister's mandate letter. Prime Minister Trudeau should direct his Minister of Transport to make aviation safety a top priority and fund it properly," Captain McConnell said.

The Canadian Federal Pilots Association represents the 430 licensed pilots who work for Transport Canada as aviation inspectors.

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Inspections decline 9.5%

According to the government's response, Transport Canada did 9.5% fewer inspections in 2016 compared to 2014.

Number of Inspections and Certifications from 2014-Present:

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018**
Inspections	8,229	7,695	7,473	7,671
Certification Activities	Not Available*	Not Available*	118,226	122,985
Total Oversight Activities	Not Available*	Not Available*	125,699	130,656

* Systematic tracking of certification activities only began in 2016, the data for these years is incomplete or not available.

** Planned Inspections