

# Annual Safety Review 2021

## News story

The AAIB Annual Safety Review 2021 has been published. It includes information on occurrences and the safety action taken or planned in response to AAIB investigations concluded in 2021.



The Air Accidents Investigation Branch has published its Annual Safety Review which includes information on occurrences and the safety action taken or planned in response to AAIB investigations concluded in 2021.

- The AAIB received 746 occurrence notifications (compared to 826 in 2019 and 553 in 2020) and opened 28 field investigations, five of which were into fatal accidents in the UK resulting in seven deaths. A further 96 investigations were opened by correspondence.
- In 2021 the AAIB published 24 field investigation reports. These comprised five investigations into fatal General Aviation accidents, 17 field investigations into non-fatal accidents or serious incidents to both General Aviation and Commercial Air Transport aircraft. Two Unmanned Aircraft System field investigations were also published.
- The Branch issued 37 Safety Recommendations including 8 which were classified as safety recommendations of global concern (SRGC). Most of the recommendations related to the regulation of aircraft operations or the regulation of aircraft design, production and manufacturing.
- The Review provides details of 188 significant actions to enhance safety taken proactively by the industry in 2021 as a direct result of AAIB investigations.
- In addition, the AAIB appointed an accredited representative to 46 overseas investigations in 2021 and these continue to be a very

important part of the Branch's work.

Crispin Orr, Chief Inspector of Air Accidents said:

"All the fatalities from air accidents in the UK in 2021 were associated with General Aviation (GA). Most involved loss of control, either at low speed close to the ground, or following an inadvertent entry into clouds by pilots without an IMC rating. The normal seasonal variations in GA activity were exaggerated somewhat by lockdowns in 2021 but the overall accident statistics and prevalent occurrence types were not unusual.

"International travel restrictions continued to suppress Commercial Air Transport (CAT) activity, with a commensurate reduction in CAT occurrences. A few serious incidents were directly related to the return to flying, some due to aircraft system failures but also some associated with a lack of aircrew recency. The absence of a surge in incidents in 2021 perhaps reflected the success of the industry in managing the risks associated with the return to flying and also the slow pace of the recovery. That said, the destabilising effects of the pandemic on the entire aviation eco-system may continue for some time and there is no room for complacency with regard to aviation safety.

"Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) occurrences accounted for a quarter of the notifications received by the AAIB in 2021 and the increased levels of reporting from this sector is welcomed. The AAIB has been investigating selected UAS accidents since 2015 and an article on what we have learnt and fed back to the industry is included in this Review. Unfortunately, some of the hard lessons learnt in the development of manned aviation in the 20th century (such as the need to expect and train for failures) are having to be relearnt by the UAS sector in the 21st century. Our investigation of selected occurrences is helping to accelerate this process."

The Annual Safety Review also contains articles on how the AAIB collaborates internationally; lessons learnt from our investigation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) as well as the timeline of an accident investigation.

[Read the Annual Safety Review](#)

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