

CAA set to tackle corruption with the introduction of a tip-offs hotline

The South African Civil Aviation Authority has introduced a national tip-offs hotline that enables anonymous members of the public and those involved in aviation to report suspected fraud and corruption or unlawful activities that may eventually jeopardise safety and security in aviation.

“Crime in general, fraud, bribery and other related corrupt activities are societal problems that can hamper a country’s growth if left unattended. South Africa can never afford to have that sort of drawback through these unlawful activities that are literally eating away at its treasured growth. Moreover, aviation is at the heart of economic growth in this country. If you have people and businesses unwilling to rely on your country’s aviation transport system due to suspected weaknesses in its safety and security system, you are literally hampering this very economic growth and also compromising on safety and security,” explained the acting Director of Civil Aviation, Mr. Zakhele Thwala.

According to Mr. Thwala, the tip-offs hotline is an extension of the SACAA’s good corporate governance practices as well as safety and security monitoring systems.

“Since inception, the SACAA has been outsourcing its internal audit services to external service providers; however the Board resolved to establish an in-house internal audit service. This resulted in the appointment of an Executive Manager Internal Audit in October 2010 who reports to the Board. The implementation of the tip-offs hotline and staffing of this newly established unit speaks to the commitment the organisation has towards ensuring good corporate governance within the Authority. The hotline is one of those systems aimed at ensuring good governance and augments longstanding safety reporting efforts such as the Confidential Aviation Hazard Reporting System (CAHRS),” Mr. Thwala elaborated.

He further said that the tip-offs hotline is outsourced and therefore totally independent of the SACAA. As such it guarantees that all persons reporting suspected corruption will remain anonymous, unless they choose to reveal their identity.

The hotline number, which is 0800 997 263, is operated by personnel able to respond to calls in all 11 official languages, 24 hours a day, 365 day per year. "In addition, call centre operators are trained to interview callers, in order to probe for specific facts. This helps in recording as much information as possible and ensuring that the reported cases are understood clearly and therefore can be investigated and concluded without much hassle. We therefore urge the public to be as detailed as possible in order for us to complete investigations," said Mr. Thwala.

Whistleblowers can alternatively use the following methods to report unlawful activities.

Fax: 0800 00 77 88
E-mail: sacaa@tip-offs.com
Postal address: Tip-offs Anonymous
FreePost KZN 138
Umhlanga Rocks
4320

Mr. Thwala said that the ultimate goal of the hotline is to eradicate corruption and bribery in the SACAA and aviation industry in order to ensure reliable aviation transportation of passengers and goods.

"Whilst the SACAA prides itself on its independence, credibility and commitment to conduct its business activities with honesty and integrity; we cannot afford to be blasé in our approach. We are aware that the aviation industry is very competitive. We are also mindful that errors and blatant omissions have fatal consequences in aviation and hence the SACAA is being proactive in ensuring that there is a platform for everyone to anonymously report dishonest or fraudulent activities by SACAA employees or any of our stakeholders".

It is expected that the hotline will receive and deal with issues related to, among others, bribery or abuse of power and disregard for company policies or procedures.

"Since its introduction at the beginning of June, the hotline is surprisingly in use already. This authenticates our instinct to be proactive and introduce this type of platform and we hope that the number will increase as the word spreads," Mr. Thwala concluded.

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About the SACAA:

The South African Civil Aviation Authority ("SACAA") is a juristic body established in terms of the Civil Aviation Act, 2009 (Act No. 13 of 2009) ("the Act"). SACAA is governed and controlled by the Civil Aviation Authority Board ("the Board"). In terms of mandate, the SACAA is tasked with promoting and maintaining a safe, secure and sustainable civil aviation environment, by regulating and overseeing the functioning and development of the industry in an efficient, cost-effective, and customer-friendly manner according to international standards.

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