

# Vertical Aviation Safety Team Charter



***Safety Above All***

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# Vertical Aviation Safety Team Charter

## 1.0 Who We Are

The Vertical Aviation Safety Team (VAST) is a public–private initiative to enhance worldwide flight operations safety in all segments of the vertical flight industry. Team members comprise international regional safety teams; safety authorities, including civil aviation authorities; and other industry stakeholders that work to improve worldwide vertical flight safety.

- **Regional safety teams**, which may include representatives from national or transnational safety authorities (see description below), and industry stakeholder groups seeking to improve the safety of civil vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) operations in their respective airspace systems.
- **Safety authorities** include the International Civil Aviation Organization, a specialized United Nations agency; national civil aviation authorities (such as the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the civil aviation authorities (CAAs) of the United Kingdom, Sudan, and Colombia); and other international agencies (European Union Aviation Safety Agency, for example); and nationally recognized safety organizations (such as the National Transportation Safety Board in the US, the Transportation Safety Board in Canada, and the Transport Accident Investigation Commission in New Zealand).
- **Other industry stakeholders** include OEMs, training providers, operators, service providers, and vertical flight industry associations such as Helicopter Association International, the European Helicopter Association, and the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International.

## 2.0 Vision

The VAST vision is a worldwide vertical flight community with zero fatal accidents achieved through cooperation and collaboration.

## 3.0 Mission

The organization’s mission is to continuously improve the worldwide vertical flight community’s safety culture and operational performance through collaboration, harmonization, coordination, and implementation of global safety information, resources, and programs while supporting regional safety team data that promote vertical flight’s societal contributions.

## 4.0 Goals

VAST has five chief goals:

- Establish VAST as the world’s most trusted source for vertical flight safety information and resources
- Establish working groups to represent key segments and issues relevant to the global VTOL industry
- Formalize leadership positions, working groups, and advisory roles for participating organizations and individuals
- Identify, collect, harmonize, and deliver centralized access to safety information and resources from participating stakeholder entities
- Provide and coordinate a forum where regional safety teams, safety authorities, and other industry stakeholders can work together on vertical flight safety issues.

## 5.0 Background

In 1997, the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security set a 10-year goal of reducing the US fatal aviation accident rate by 80%. At the same time, the commission identified the need for strong government–industry partnerships to support the aviation system of the future. This effort resulted in the organization that became the Commercial Aviation Safety Team (CAST), which focuses on commercial air travel.

In 2005, attendees at the International Helicopter Safety Symposium created the International Helicopter Safety Team (IHST), modeled after CAST, to reduce the helicopter accident rate. Fourteen years later, the IHST transitioned to the International Helicopter Safety Foundation (IHSF). To expand its public–private efforts and to enhance worldwide flight operational safety in all segments of the vertical flight industry, in 2021 the IHSF was rebranded as VAST.

## 6.0 Strategic Approach

In its strategy for enhancing flight operational safety in vertical flight, VAST:

- Is the international face and voice of vertical flight and fosters and promotes the industry’s growth through safety initiatives
- Receives, integrates, harmonizes, and distributes aviation safety data; develops risk reduction efforts globally; and works to reduce duplication of effort
- Uses a data-informed, consensus-based approach to define, evaluate, and support the implementation of safety enhancements based on data analyses and safety intelligence
- Coordinates and supports the actions of regional safety teams, aviation authorities, and industry stakeholders

- Serves as the arbiter between the regional safety teams to foster collaboration and coordination across safety initiatives as well as the sharing of final outputs.

## **7.0 Structure**

VAST includes two advisors who advise on all aspects of the team. There are also two general groups—the regional safety teams and the global VTOL safety stakeholders. Liaisons from these groups bring ideas, content, suggestions, and proposals from their organizations to the two advisors and the VAST Steering Committee.

VAST maintains various working groups to collect, analyze, distribute, and promote integrated aviation safety data and safety programs. The steering committee comprises one advisor, the co-chairs of the working groups, an advisor-assigned administrative support person, and a communications support person. (See Appendix C for the VAST Organizational Chart.)

The principles for participation in VAST are contained in Appendix A.

### **7.1 VAST Advisors**

VAST has two advisors, one representing the industry–operator community and one representing the regional safety teams (see Appendix B). The VAST advisors should exhibit the ability to:

- Advocate on behalf of the VAST members by establishing and maintaining relationships with all levels of vertical flight stakeholders (from the executive level to the working level)
- Contribute to strategic-level decisions and set VAST strategy based on findings from data-driven analyses
- Understand past challenges to improving vertical flight safety and offer constructive solutions to overcoming these challenges to implement working group data, recommendations, and safety programs
- Arbitrate conflicts and make decisions on all aspects of VAST’s program, including the final determination on working group recommendations.

### **7.2 VAST Liaisons**

Liaisons are leaders designated by the regional safety teams and other vertical flight global safety stakeholders. They bring to the VAST Steering Committee ideas, content, suggestions, and proposals from their organizations for consideration and implementation. Liaisons may also choose to serve in, or designate other representatives to serve in, VAST working groups.

### 7.3 VAST Support

The VAST Steering Committee has two support positions—administrative support and communications support. These positions are assigned by the advisors.

### 7.4 VAST Steering Committee

The VAST Steering Committee coordinates work between the team’s working groups. The committee compiles and integrates the ideas, content, suggestions, and proposals from the VAST liaisons and routes them to the appropriate working group for disposition. The committee also recommends projects for the Special Projects Working Group.

The steering committee comprises VAST’s working group co-chairs, the administrative and communications support personnel, and one of the team advisors. Steering committee members designate two co-leads (normally, one from the industry stakeholders and one from the safety authorities) to support compliance with this charter.

### 7.5 Working Groups

Working groups are staffed by members of the regional safety teams or other global VTOL safety stakeholders to collect, analyze, distribute, and promote integrated aviation safety data and safety programs. Each working group will be managed by two co-chairs, normally one from the industry stakeholders and one from the aviation authorities. Working group co-chairs facilitate activities of working groups and project teams. Working groups also make recommendations on the distribution of data, information, safety, and safety programs. The groups may be formed or dissolved to accommodate vertical flight safety needs. A list and description of the working groups are contained in Appendix D.

## 8.0 Meetings and Voting

VAST holds four types of meetings, according to the participating group:

- **Advisor meetings:** VAST advisor meetings will occur quarterly to support VAST’s mission and activities.
- **Steering committee meetings:** The VAST Steering Committee will meet quarterly, or more often as activity warrants.
- **Working group meetings:** VAST working group meetings will occur monthly, or as activity warrants.
- **All hands meetings:** VAST all hands meetings will occur every other month.

Most meetings will take place electronically (via telephone or video conference). One meeting each year will be face-to-face and coincide with HAI HELI-EXPO®.

## 8.1 Meetings

An agenda will be made available at least three days prior to meetings. Meeting notes will be taken during each meeting. For the working groups and steering committee, designated co-chairs or co-leads (as appropriate) are responsible for the development and distribution of the agenda and the taking of meeting notes. Agendas and meeting notes for the all hands and advisors meetings will be supported by the steering committee's administrative and communications support personnel.

Steering committee, all hands, and face-to-face meetings may include, but are not limited to, the following agenda items:

- Call to order
- Roll call of members present
- Introductions: industry and government advisors and co-chairs
- Review previous-meeting action items; complete discussion, decision-making, or voting as appropriate
- Accident review
- Working group reports
- Outreach update
- New business
- Action item review (include the following for each item)
  - Action/milestone item
  - Action/milestone date
  - A primary point of contact
- Upcoming VAST meetings
  - All hands
  - Face-to-face (date, time, desired agenda items)
  - Upcoming events VAST representatives will attend
  - Announcements
  - Adjournment.

## 8.2 Process and Voting

All hands and face-to-face meetings generally will be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order*. Motions are used to introduce new pieces of business or propose decisions or actions. A second motion must be made, after which there is limited discussion and, if applicable, a vote.

VAST decisions are approved by a simple majority, unless special circumstances dictate otherwise. A meeting quorum is achieved with two-thirds of voting members.

If any vote decision is required, each voting member will be polled and his or her vote recorded. Voting may be conducted in person, in writing (including e-mail), or by other electronic means (such as via telephone or video conference). If a voting member is unable to attend, his or her vote may be submitted electronically or by proxy. Only another voting member may serve as proxy. If a proxy is voting, the member will inform the working group co-chairs and advisors (if appropriate) in writing of the name of the proxy and the specific subject on which the individual has the authority to vote.

## 9.0 Modifications to This Charter

The VAST advisors have the authority and responsibility to modify this charter in order to meet the team's goals as necessary. Modifications may be in the form of an appendix to this charter and should be signed by both VAST advisors.

*James A. Viola*

James A. Viola (May 13, 2021 09:24 EDT)

*VAST Advisor, Industry–Operator Representative*

May 13, 2021

*Date*

*Miguel A. Marin*

Miguel A. Marin (May 13, 2021 13:17 EDT)

*VAST Advisor, Regional Safety Team Representative*

May 13, 2021

*Date*

## Appendix A: Principles of VAST Participation

VAST's strength lies in its extensive international membership, active member participation, commitment to safety, and ability to initiate change. Voluntary collaboration among key stakeholders in helicopter safety has proven effective in reducing fatal accident rates.

VAST will maintain an effective and responsive infrastructure to ensure a high level of commitment, collaboration, and responsibility and a consistent approach to issues. This infrastructure will ensure that VAST has the necessary processes in place to provide consistent, effective leadership in the important task of improving vertical flight safety.

VAST members (regional safety teams, aviation authorities, and industry stakeholders) will provide the resources to support VAST's efforts within reasonable budgetary constraints. Each VAST member shall be responsible for providing personnel as well as organizational time, travel, and effort. VAST will adopt processes that maximize utilization of preexisting vertical flight safety initiatives.

VAST members may designate alternate representatives to facilitate consistent organizational participation. Other individuals and observers may attend meetings to report on or discuss VAST actions, or to provide direct administrative support to VAST members.

VAST members will, as practical:

- Come to meetings prepared, having reviewed pre-meeting materials, and ready to engage and make decisions
- Complete assigned tasks
- Maintain communications and coordination with parent organizations or constituencies
- Deliberate and raise issues
- Actively support VAST decisions and enlist parent-organization support
- Be prepared to commit personal time and energy to VAST priorities
- Be prepared to commit time and resources from their parent organization
- Share parent-organization input with other VAST members
- Work to minimize or eliminate duplication of effort
- Use approved VAST presentations to represent VAST's objectives and/or products to external organizations
- Stay focused on the VAST vision, goal, and strategic approach
- Recognize and monitor the actions of each working group
- Review, approve, and endorse safety products.

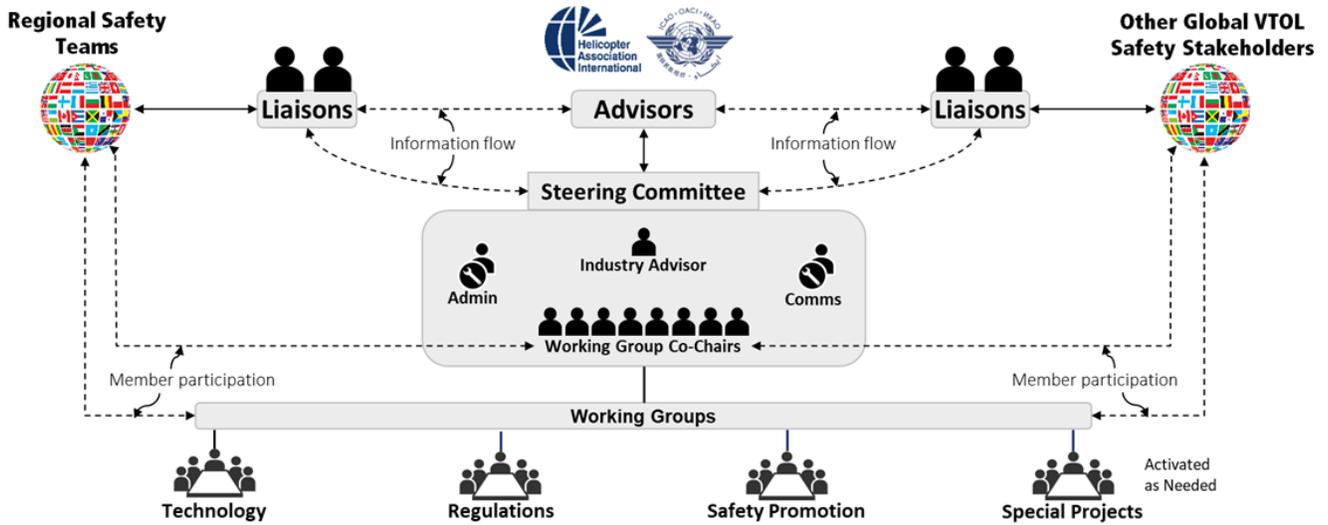
## **Appendix B: Advisors**

**Industry Representative:** James Viola, Helicopter Association International

**Regional Safety Team Representative:** Miguel Marin, International Civil Aviation Organization

# Appendix C: Organization Chart

## VAST ORGANIZATION



# Appendix D: Working Groups

## D1.0 Co-Chairs

Each working group has two co-chairs, normally one from the industry stakeholders and one from the aviation authorities. Working group co-chairs are appointed by their respective working group members.

## D2.0 Technology Working Group

The VAST Technology Working Group identifies and evaluates the applicability of safety technologies as they pertain to the existing global helicopter fleet and their potential application to emerging rotorcraft and other vertical flight aircraft. The working group will promote the integration of promising new safety technologies and foster harmonization of international safety efforts.

## D3.0 Regulations Working Group

The Regulations Working Group reviews and assesses industry issues related to the implementation of vertical flight rules, regulations, standards, and supporting documents.

## D4.0 Safety Promotion Working Group

The Safety Promotion Working Group supports VAST's goal of becoming the world's most trusted industry source, recognized for consistent, reliable, and accessible delivery of valued and diverse VTOL safety information and resources.

## D5.0 Special Projects Working Group

The Special Projects Working Group works with and supports projects conducted by the regional safety teams and aviation authorities. The group ensures the harmonization of these projects to promote consistency among and between regional safety teams, vertical flight associations, and aviation authorities. This may require working with other VAST working groups. The Special Projects Working Group will be active as needed.

Currently as a special project, the aviation authorities and regional safety teams have established or are developing vertical flight safety ratings schemas. The Special Projects Working Group will work with the aviation authorities and regional safety teams to harmonize these schemas into a consistent program as much as is practical.

# VAST Charter Document Ready for Signature

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