

Knowledge, awareness and conformity to International Airport emergency preparedness standards: the case of Wilson Airport in Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract:

Aviation accidents and disaster preparedness in air transport remain global challenges due to airport accidents that continue to occur in different parts of the 'world, including Kenya. These accidents may be caused by human error, mechanical, terror, and weather among others. In Kenya, in recent past, several accidents by small crafts taking off or landing at Wilson Airport in Nairobi have been reported. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the knowledge and awareness among Wilson Airport staff on emergency preparedness at the airport and assess the airport's conformity to international emergency preparedness standards. The study employed descriptive survey design where knowledge and awareness as well as equipment and infrastructure were examined against regulatory requirements. The study relied on primary data employees and departmental heads at the airport. A total of 33 employees and 13 departmental heads were interviewed using questionnaires and interview guides respectively. The study used observation of equipment and infrastructure to compare them against international standards. The study also used secondary data which included the airport's contingency plans and the international civil aviation organization airport manual. Data on knowledge and awareness were analyzed through descriptive statistics and presented in form of frequencies and percentages using tables and graphs. Secondary data were analyzed through content analysis meaning that the study looked at what preparedness measures exist at the airport against international standards. The findings of the study showed that the majority of staff have knowledge awareness experience on emergency procedures, given the highest duration at the station is between two years and five years. There is enough working force at Wilson Airport who has various skills and capacity as pertains safety management systems. The available emergency gear is regularly inspected, meaning that there are functional with minor defects. Dissemination of information among stakeholders is Average causing low cooperation in the cases of emergency at the Wilson Airport. There is a restricted document like contingency plans which is not easily available to all stake holders due to security reasons. Also, constraints in resources and lack of collaboration among stakeholders stand in the way of ensuring emergency preparedness at Wilson Airport. The findings and recommendation of the evaluation study may be used by the Airports' Authority to adjust policies regarding safety and preparedness of the airports staff in cases of disaster and emergencies. The study findings may also aid further research in similar fields of disaster management in air transport.