

# ATM Safety Strategy

2026-2030

Version 1





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# Chief Executive Foreword

At **AirNav Ireland**, we carry a profound responsibility. Every year, we ensure the safe passage of more than **160 million passengers and crew**, and the aircraft that carry them, through Irish-controlled airspace. This responsibility sits at the heart of everything we do.

Safety is not simply a requirement for AirNav Ireland — it is our **promise**, and it is our **number one priority**.

Our **Safety Strategy 2026–2030** sets out clearly how we will continue to protect passengers, crew, aircraft, and our people in an increasingly complex and dynamic aviation environment. It defines the principles, priorities, and actions that will guide our decisions, our investments, and our daily operations over the next four years.

However, safety is not delivered by strategy alone. It is delivered through the **actions, professionalism, and judgement of every individual** across AirNav Ireland. Whether operational, technical, corporate, or support-focused, each role contributes directly to the safe provision of our services.

**I would like to thank all our people for their continued dedication, expertise, and commitment to safety.** Your professionalism ensures that AirNav Ireland continues to meet its obligations to the travelling public, our customers, and our regulators — every day, without compromise.

**Together, we will continue to make safety the foundation of everything we do.**

**Gerald Caffrey – Chief Executive**



# AirNav Ireland Services

AirNav Ireland provides air traffic management services across 451,000 square kilometres of Irish-controlled airspace and offers aeronautical communications up to the midpoint of the North Atlantic. These services support the flow of air traffic between Europe and North America. AirNav Ireland employs circa 320 Air Traffic Controllers based in Dublin, Cork, and Shannon, approximately 110 Air Traffic Safety Electronics Personnel, 50 Radio Officers in County Clare, as well as Data Assistants and support staff who help maintain the safe, orderly, and efficient movement of air traffic. The organisation has consistently met high safety standards, attributed to a combination of the expertise of our people and ongoing investments in technology and infrastructure.

# Code of Practice

The Company is committed to the highest standards of corporate governance and complies, in all material respects, with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 (“the Code”) and established good governance practices.

The Company has put in place measures to comply with the Code and other governance measures and has an established set of policies and procedures to enable ongoing compliance with such requirements.





## Our Purpose

Keeping Ireland's skies safe and connected, every flight, every day.



## What We Do

We provide safe, sustainable, and world-class air navigation services that connect Ireland to global airspace, driven by our expert teams, advanced technology, and strong partnerships. Safety is our absolute priority and underlines everything we do.

AirNav Ireland operates to the highest international safety standards set by:

- The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)
- The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)
- The Irish Aviation Authority (IAA)
- The European Union (EU)

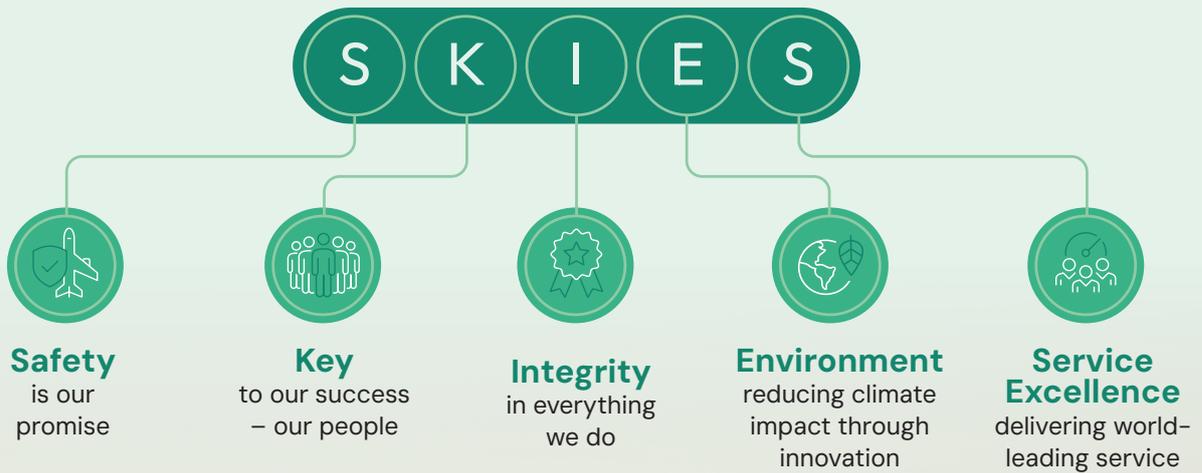
These guide AirNav Ireland in ensuring that Irish civil aviation operates to the most stringent safety standards.



## Our Vision

By 2030, AirNav Ireland aims to be one of Europe's leading ANSP's - recognised for uncompromising safety, minimal delays, and climate-smart operations that enable seamless air travel.

# Our Values



# Safety is our absolute priority

The purpose of our Safety Strategy 2026 – 2030 is to protect passengers, crew, and aircraft by prioritising safety and security, managing risks, and adhering to legislation and best practices. We ensure our people are trained and competent, allocate resources wisely, and uphold high-quality standards while fostering clear communication and mutual respect. Safety is essential in all areas of AirNav Ireland's operations. It forms a key part of both management and decision-making, and is embedded throughout AirNav Ireland's organisational structure, procedures, and activities.

We wholeheartedly endorse the ICAO aspiration goal of Zero fatalities in international aviation.

We are committed to continuously improving our Safety Management System through innovation, collaboration, and research. The Company aims to be a leading provider in its field. In furtherance of our mission, we will:

1. Make safety an explicit activity within AirNav Ireland
2. Identify systematically all safety risks and implement appropriate mitigation measures
3. Provide consistent, efficient, and practical support for projects
4. Provide evidence and arguments to demonstrate regulatory compliance.

Safety remains our top priority and serves as the foundation for all our operations. Safety is delivered through our people, and we are committed to fostering teamwork, upholding integrity and just culture, and maintaining an environment built on mutual respect, with an unwavering commitment to ethical conduct. We are dedicated to ongoing innovation and consistently delivering service excellence.



# Introduction

## The ATM Safety Strategy consists of two volumes:

- **Volume I** – focuses on the strategic safety themes for AirNav Ireland
- **Volume II** – outlines the safety goals and key actions at the level of detail required to implement strategic safety priorities. This document serves as a distinct objective for tracking progress and incorporating additional actions as they are identified.

In our prior ATM Safety Strategies, we outlined our approach to achieving ongoing safety enhancements, building upon four thematic elements introduced first in 2016 as part of the CANSO Europe Strategy for the Future of Safety in ATM.

These themes will continue to serve as the framework and direction. The four thematic areas guiding our current strategic developments are:



**People  
Create  
Safety**



**Safety  
Intelligence**



**Tailored  
and  
Proportionate**



**Challenging  
and  
Learning**

AirNav Ireland's ATM Safety Strategy for 2026–2030 aims to enhance air traffic management safety through a robust Safety Management System, safety governance, operational safety measures, and strategic safety objectives. The strategy emphasises integrating new technologies and supporting our aviation customers. The strategy follows an iterative and evolving process that reflects our commitment to delivering safe, efficient, and innovative air traffic management services. The safety management process forms an essential component of organisational management and decision-making, and is



seamlessly integrated into the structure, operations, and processes of AirNav Ireland. Safety management practices are implemented at strategic, operational, programme, and project levels. Consequently, it is imperative that the Safety Directorate collaborates effectively with all departments to achieve established safety objectives.

Benchmarking against leading industry peers and fulfilling our RP4 Safety commitments, AirNav Ireland recognises the necessity to remain agile, lean, and forward-thinking. This mindset ensures that we not only keep pace with global advancements, but also proactively shape the future of Irish and international air navigation services.

AirNav Ireland is continuously evolving and as an organisation we must demonstrate an agile approach to adapting to and embracing new ATM technologies. As an organisation we will continue to benchmark ourselves against our peers and through our RP4 Safety commitments.



In shaping this strategy, we have drawn extensively on internationally recognised guidance and best practices. The plan is anchored in the principles and frameworks set out by the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan, the EASA European Plan for Aviation Safety and its strategic safety priorities, as well as the IAA State Plan for Aviation Safety and its associated priorities. By aligning with these cornerstone documents, AirNav Ireland ensures that its approach is harmonised with global and European safety ambitions, while also addressing Ireland’s unique operational context.

A central aspect of our continued operations is the advancement of our Integrated Management System, which provides a unified framework that consolidates multiple management systems into one cohesive structure. The safety management system is a key component of the integrated management system, and we will continue to incorporate and support its evolution. The integrated management system reflects a strong organisational commitment to safety, quality, compliance and security performance through proactive and systematic practices.

The purpose of the strategy is to align our long-term safety vision with day-to-day operations, ensuring everyone moves in the same direction, connecting strategic goals with operational activities. The strategy contains several critical goals that will significantly improve our safety performance.





# People Create Safety

**Our people are our greatest asset. Safety is ensured when each individual assumes personal responsibility and demonstrates ownership.**

Safety relies on individuals taking responsibility throughout the organisation, not just at the front line. We must foster a culture of forward-thinking accountability, so everyone understands how their role contributes to current and future safety. People need both the authority and capability to act, so raising awareness is essential. Those performing the work know the risks best and are positioned to manage them. Because many tasks occur without direct supervision, safety requires genuine commitment from every member. Ultimately, safety should be viewed as a fundamental value, integrated with service rather than set in opposition to it. The safety management process consistently takes into account the dynamic and diverse characteristics of human behaviour and culture.

It is essential to acknowledge that individual actions and behaviours underpin AirNav Ireland's safety principles and values. AirNav Ireland has a clearly defined Safety and Just Culture Policy; breaches of these standards are addressed appropriately, and all staff are empowered to challenge substandard behaviours at any level. Collaborative effort is fundamental to delivering a safe service.

Leadership, including the Accountable Manager play a critical role in shaping our organisational culture through their commitment to safety. It is imperative to remain vigilant against complacency and any factors that may divert focus from safe service delivery. Additionally, when establishing targets or objectives, we must ensure they promote the desired behaviours and avoid creating unintended negative incentives

**Just Culture** is a culture in which front-line operators and others are not punished for actions, omissions or decisions taken by them which are commensurate with their experience and training, but where gross negligence, wilful violations and destructive acts are not tolerated.

*Regulation (EU) No 996/2010*

## Safety Strategic Goals

1	Ensure that our people are trained and competent to perform their SMS duties.
2	Enhance our wellbeing initiatives for all staff by providing training and education.
3	Introduce Peer Support Group to all ATCOs and ATSEPs.
4	Implement recommendations from 2nd Safety Culture Survey.
5	Conduct a full review of roster values.
6	Embed a strong “Just Culture” in our organisations as an enabler for safety improvements.
7	Complete our 3rd Safety Culture Survey.
8	Ensure that our policies and support programmes on prevention and detection of misuse of psychoactive substances are best in class.
9	Work in partnership with newly established Head of Operational Safety and Change Management Unit.
10	Deploy the CANSO Standard of Excellence in Human Performance Management to assist AirNav Ireland assess, develop and improve our human performance management.





# Safety Intelligence

**Safety intelligence represents the proactive gathering, analysis, and application of safety-related information to inform decisions and drive continuous improvement. By integrating safety intelligence into our operations, we move beyond reactive measures, enabling the identification of emerging risks, learning from incidents and near-misses, and anticipating potential threats before they materialise.**

Through the systematic collection of data from across AirNav Ireland, including staff feedback, incident reports, operational monitoring, and aviation trends, we develop actionable insights that underpin our strategic safety goals. This intelligence supports efforts such as aligning staff competencies with advancing automation, reviewing roster values, fostering a just culture, and analysing psychological safety. By translating

raw data into meaningful knowledge, we enhance our capacity for informed decision-making and targeted interventions.

Moreover, safety intelligence is integral to building a learning organisation—one that values transparency, encourages open reporting, and continuously adapts to a changing environment. Through ongoing analysis and knowledge-sharing, we not only meet regulatory requirements but also set benchmarks for excellence in safety performance. This approach ensures that safety remains a dynamic and embedded element of our organisational culture, supporting both current objectives and future ambitions.

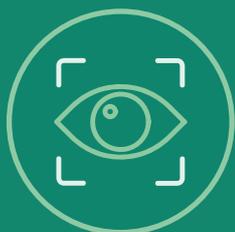
An essential component of safety intelligence involves effective collaboration with operational units, facilitated by the pivotal role of the Head of Operational Safety. This position serves as a critical link, aligning strategic safety initiatives with tactical safety practices.



## Safety Strategic Goals

11	Identify and implement innovative solutions to improve safety, guided by comprehensive risk assessments that systematically identify potential hazards. These include integrated risk management & digitalisation of safety oversight by working with the new Digitalisation and Transformation Office.
12	Leverage digital and data-driven solutions to generate operational insights that support effective safety risk management.
13	Achieve and maintain Level D in all EoSM categories by 2029.
14	Strengthen risk-based oversight and internal audit mechanisms in line with IAA and EASA expectations.
15	Enhance and embed AOI cell to deliver high performance on the quality and timeliness of safety investigations.
16	Reduce ATM contribution to Runway Incursions, Separation Minima Infringements & Class A, B & C events.
17	Leverage big data analytics to support predictive safety risk management.
18	Monitor and improve performance against Safety Performance Indicator targets set in Aeronautical Notice S.17.
19	Identify and recommend tools that support safety decision making.
20	Continue to support and invest in the EuroControl 'Weak Signals' safety performance project.





## Tailored and Proportionate

**It is essential to advance our Safety Management Systems to ensure they remain adaptable, progressive, and equipped to meet future challenges. The safety philosophy we adopt must be purpose-built—requiring only the necessary level of assurance rather than excessive measures. We recommend constructing the SMS around a set of core principles or values that serve as non-negotiable boundaries, while allowing for multiple approaches to achieve the required assurance.**

Moreover, a tailored and proportionate approach extends beyond mere processes for managing safety assurance. This ethos suggests, for instance, leveraging historical performance data to customise training programs for individuals. It also encompasses the principle that risks should be managed at the organisational level where their impact will be felt. Empowering employees to implement risk mitigation strategies as part of their routine responsibilities will support a more balanced and effective risk management approach.

We need to integrate safety into every stage of our projects, changes, and procedures, rather than adding it later. This enables more balanced decisions in design, procurement, planning, maintenance, contracting, and partnerships. Safety-focused procedures should have built-in risk controls. Our vision, strategy, and priorities must always consider safety. Additionally, our approach to procedure design should match the level of risk involved, ensuring efforts are appropriately targeted.

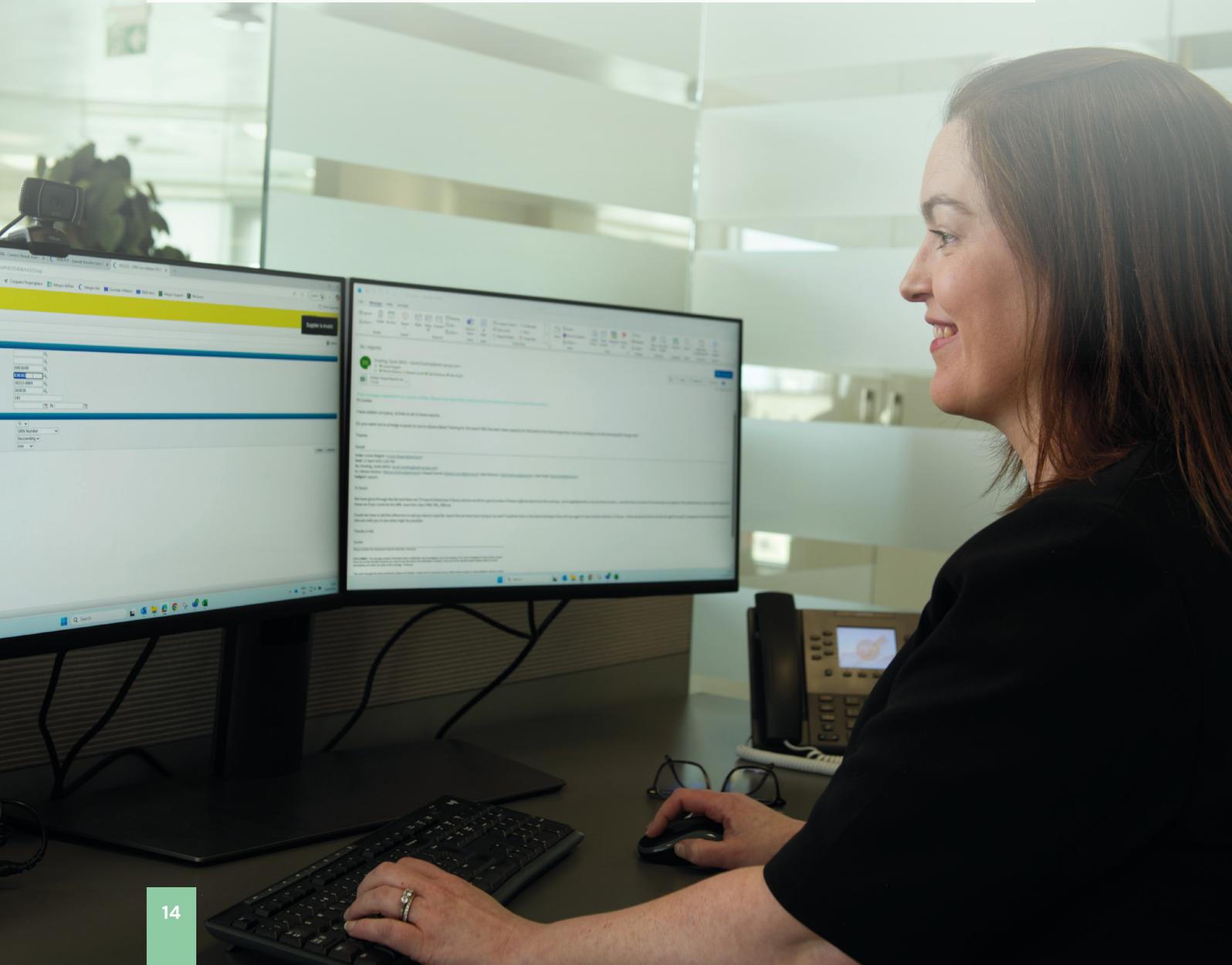
It is essential to identify and assess actual risks in a measured manner, focusing on the factors of greatest significance. Our approach will incorporate evidence-based decision-making through comprehensive safety data analysis, impact assessments, ongoing monitoring, and rigorous evaluation. Findings from compliance audits provide valuable data that can enhance and refine our decision-making processes.

Change management consists of principles, techniques, and guidelines applied to the human aspects of implementing significant change initiatives in organisations. Its primary concern is not the factors that drive change—such as technology, restructuring, mergers and acquisitions, or globalisation—but rather the methods for managing the human dynamics associated with key projects so individuals can adjust to the resulting impacts. The purpose of the Safety Management Unit is to facilitate effective transitions during periods of change. By offering education, information, and support, the aim is to guide people through the stages of adjustment and adaptation.



## Safety Strategic Goals

21	Ensure that our SMS is prepared to address future challenges effectively.
22	Review our change management procedures to ensure they are compliant, user friendly, and intuitive.
23	Implement Lean Six Sigma methodologies to identify opportunities for safety process improvement.
24	Continue to challenge our safety culture by a process of continuous learning and questioning.
25	Uphold our core safety values while enabling growth.
26	Complete Recommendations arising from Safety and Operational Task Force.
27	Support and collaborate with Change Management Unit.





# Challenging and Learning

**Collecting and sharing knowledge is essential for safety management. Adopting a systematic approach to learning from all experiences helps share insights, enhance learning, and clarify how safety is maintained in the ATM system.**

Effective and transparent two-way communication facilitates alignment within AirNav Ireland toward shared safety management goals. While management's visions, policies, and strategies are fundamental in establishing AirNav Ireland's direction, it is equally important to acknowledge constructive feedback and challenges from all levels. Such input provides valuable insights into operational realities and informs risk management processes. AirNav Ireland leaders empower qualified people, allocate necessary resources, and prioritise safety initiatives in a systematic manner.

We will continue to strive to become a learning organisation that proactively anticipate unforeseen and latent circumstances and continuously challenge themselves to improve.

**Psychological safety** refers to a shared belief within a team or organisation that it's safe to take interpersonal risks—like speaking up, asking questions, admitting mistakes, or challenging the status quo—without fear of embarrassment, punishment, or rejection.

Providing people with resources, focusing on safety measures, and improving collaboration within the organisation can help utilise a range of skills and perspectives to address current challenges.

**Psychological safety** isn't about being nice. It's about giving candid feedback, openly admitting mistakes, and learning from each other.

*Amy Edmondson*

## Safety Strategic Goals

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| <b>28</b> | Improve how we learn from and collaborate with others to address risk.   |
| <b>29</b> | Create a culture of questioning and challenge our preconceptions.  |
| <b>30</b> | Challenge others on the pace and rigour of risk mitigation avoiding success engendered optimism.   |
| <b>31</b> | Ensure clear understanding of roles, accountabilities and responsibilities for safety across the business so that there is complete alignment towards the common goal of safety. |
| <b>32</b> | Identify software solutions that support ATCO decision making and situational awareness like ASMGCS/NEW SAFETY TOOLS/TOPSKY (BAROMETRIC ALITMETER, STCA).                        |
| <b>33</b> | Conduct an analysis of psychological safety in AirNav Ireland.   |

# Final Thoughts

This strategic safety plan establishes a foundation for AirNav Ireland to pursue its safety objectives, respond effectively to change, and maintain a safety advantage. By fostering an environment of innovation, collaboration, and continual learning, we aim to strengthen our resilience and prepare the organisation for long-term success in an evolving aviation landscape. The adaptable nature of this plan ensures ongoing relevance and effectiveness in meeting future challenges.

The effectiveness of AirNav Ireland's Safety Management System has resulted in achieving one of the leading safety records in Europe. This accomplishment is grounded in the expertise and dedication of our people, as well as the ongoing support from senior management and the board of directors in providing resources for the safety management system. The organisation continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to maintaining high safety standards within the industry.

While previous successes are valuable, it is important to consistently identify safety risks and apply suitable mitigation measures. This approach aims to enhance safety processes by incorporating innovation, training, and technological solutions.

Your ongoing dedication to maintaining safety standards is acknowledged and sincerely appreciated.

**Martin Timmons – Safety Manager**







[airnav.ie](http://airnav.ie)