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HAI Introduces SMS Program for Members

Alexandria, Va. (October 11, 2021) – Helicopter Association International (HAI) is excited to announce a new safety management system (SMS) software program designed for small operators and others with cost concerns.

“One of the most exciting elements of the HAI SMS Program is how quickly and efficiently it will help to improve safety across operations,” says James Viola, president and CEO of HAI. “We are truly grateful to our partner providers for enabling us to offer this tremendous program.”

The National Transportation Safety Board has long advocated for mandating SMS programs in all revenue passenger-carrying flight operations, including it in [their annual Most Wanted List](#). The HAI SMS Program would meet the requirements set forth in their proposal and is equally available to member companies who do not carry passengers for hire.

“Also significant is the amount of money our new software-provider partners will save our members,” adds Viola. “Signing up for the program through one of these providers should save most of our members more money than the cost of their HAI membership. I cannot imagine any HAI member not being interested in improving their safety program while saving money at the same time.”

Open solely to HAI Operator Members in good standing, the HAI SMS Program is the direct result of an HAI membership survey in which a significant number of respondents requested turnkey SMS support programs, including ways to make an SMS easier to implement and track. In response, HAI solicited proposals from industry-leading SMS software providers, expecting to select a single provider from the responses. Instead, while evaluating the bids, HAI determined that choosing 3 of the 14 submitted proposals would better meet the needs of its members.

“Our members asked for assistance with SMS programs, and we are pleased to offer this solution, which has the versatility to meet the needs of nearly every operator that currently does not have their own program,” says Viola. “Our program also offers flexibility, allowing our members to consider each vendor and select the one that is best aligned with their needs. This is affordable SMS for all of us!”

The three software providers HAI chose for the HAI SMS Program are:

- Air Charter Safety Foundation (ACSF) of Washington, D.C. ACSF provides a full range of SMS software options.
- Baldwin Safety and Compliance of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. Baldwin provides the Baldwin SMS Product Suite, which offers a menu of options available for small, medium-sized, and large businesses.

- WYVERN Ltd. of Nashua, New Hampshire. WYVERN offers its SMS Software and 24/7/365 Support Services package, with affordable options for small operators and other choices with premium SMS software capabilities.

Both Baldwin and WYVERN offer aviation safety action program (ASAP) reporting modules on their servers for companies participating in ACSF's third party-managed ASAP program. ACSF can then access the ASAP reports and conduct Event Review Committee (ERC) meetings with the participating company and the FAA. ASAP is a voluntary, self-reporting program that identifies and reduces possible flight safety concerns and mitigates risk.

"We're excited that HAI is leading the charge to provide its members the ability to implement an SMS program with a simple, low-cost solution," says Robert J. Rufli, chairman of the Board of Governors for ACSF.

The ACSF SMS Tool is a modern, simple, safe, secure Web-based tool to help helicopter operators easily manage their SMS needs. The product allows aircraft operators the ability to document aviation safety data, perform risk assessments, assign corrective actions, and export ASAP reports to the FAA.

"When it comes to SMS, it's important to get it right the first time. Why build it yourself when you can leverage the experience from industry leaders like HAI and ACSF," Rufli says.

"Baldwin Safety and Compliance is honored to be working with HAI to help bring safety management to the association's worldwide flight and maintenance operator members," says Donald Baldwin, president of Baldwin Aviation. "The Baldwin system is a highly customizable solution that addresses the vital components and elements of a sound safety management system.

"The International Civil Aviation Organization has said that complex issues can be solved with noncomplex processes, which is the basis of scaling for organizational size. The Baldwin SMS software solution allows companies to build their safety management solution to suit their needs in maintaining and sustaining an effective safety management system," Baldwin adds. "In addition, Baldwin's 'peopleware'—comprising industry SMS experts—is available 24/7 to ensure that participating organizations are successful on their SMS journey."

"HAI and WYVERN have joined forces and are focused on facilitating an SMS for HAI's members," says Sonnie Bates, CEO of WYVERN. "This important partnership is another way that WYVERN is elevating safety and security worldwide."

WYVERN is a leader in aviation safety risk management and training. Building on its 30-year reputation for delivering value to the aviation community, WYVERN ensures operational excellence through its flagship Wingman and Flight Leader Programs. WYVERN's EXACT Program is a comprehensive and professional safety certification program for UAS end users and operators. WYVERN's Safety Leader Training Course provides the education and training that enables professionals to skillfully achieve operational excellence in any aviation organization.

One criterion for selecting ACSF, Baldwin, and WYVERN as the HAI SMS Program providers included ensuring value for HAI's members. Accordingly, each firm offered discounts on its traditional rates.

"Each of the providers worked with HAI to establish deeply discounted subscription rates, particularly for our small operators," says Chris Hill, HAI's director of safety and manager of the HAI SMS Program. "Some of the proposal evaluators were actually concerned that the programs had been scaled back in order to produce these rates, but each of these programs is the same, fully functional software solution they offer other customers."

Additionally, some of the rates are scalable, depending on the specific needs of each operator, allowing for additional aircraft, users, or premium services. The HAI SMS Program rates are available only to new SMS software subscribers and will not apply to existing customers of these programs.

HAI staff also deliberated brand awareness, reputation, and program strength in their assessment of the submissions.

“We were mildly surprised to see that every one of the 14 submissions was worthy of implementation. While we could have presented all 14, it was impractical, and we chose the software solutions we felt were the best fit for our membership. Each of these companies presented programs we know will assist our members both immediately and in the future,” says Hill. “Because of their experience and successes in this field, our partners have made HAI SMS as simple as 1-2-3. All three companies are well known and respected in the aviation industry and are highly regarded by aviation insurers.”

Each of the packages offered through the HAI SMS Program allows users to verify their compliance with current and future international and domestic regulations. While the FAA does not currently require SMS programs for all operators, HAI and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) have recommended that helicopter operators develop and adopt a safety reporting system that allows for collection of data, analysis, and corrective action where necessary. “Each of these programs provides that system for operators,” adds Hill. “They are responsive and can be adapted as a company continues to grow.”

The HAI SMS Program packages also offer training, self-auditing capabilities, gap analysis, reporting capabilities, and user support services. “We could not be more pleased with the submissions we received, and with those we chose to use,” notes Viola. “We believe our members will appreciate the versatility, and especially the value, these SMS programs offer. We believe our partners have made it so easy and affordable that it will be hard for an operator to justify not implementing an SMS program.”

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HAI is the professional trade association for the international helicopter industry and represents more than 1,100 global companies and over 16,000 industry professionals in more than 65 countries. Each year, HAI members safely operate more than 3,700 helicopters and remotely piloted aircraft approximately 2.9 million hours. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective method of commerce and to the advancement of the international helicopter community.