



Safety Center RPA Branch

Who we are & how we help you!

Maintenance SME

The Air Force Safety Center Remotely Piloted Aircraft Branch at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., understands proactive mishap prevention requires significant involvement from the maintenance (MX) community. This is why the RPA Branch has a MX subject matter expert. The SME's primary responsibility is supporting RPA Safety Investigation Boards as their AFSEC telephonic representative. As part of this role, being familiar with safety regulations along with MX technical orders and equipment is critical for success. Most important, the SME is familiar with the roles, responsibilities and expectations a MX person would have of them in the performance of their duties. For instance, the SME has a familiarization with how MX is done on the flightline as well as the various limitations or expectations on MX personnel.

Beyond the scope of a SIB, the MX SME also provides mishap data exploration recorded in the Air Force Safety Automated System database for analyzing trends, identifying historical information, and conducting research on questions tasked to the safety center. Another key additional duty for the MX SME is in relation to the recommendation closure and Memorandum

of Final Evaluation (MOFE) processes for ensuring accuracy and accountability. All in all, the MX SME is a critical player when opinions on RPA operations are released by the Air Force chief of safety.

The major challenge faced by the SME is properly communicating safety hazards so recommendations are simply not risk accepted. The way this is accomplished is through in-depth research in association with government and contractor entities in order to find the root cause for an area that needs improvement. Conversely, there have been numerous successes for the RPA MX community which include taking action on recommendations such as the MQ-9 Starter Generator. In this case, the Air Force required the MQ-9 manufacturer to redesign the equipment as a result of 80 equipment failures. This resulted in no Class A mishaps since the secondary/backup power source was installed in the MQ-9 fleet.

For questions about RPA MX practices or requests to review a safety investigation, contact the MX SME HQAFSC.SEFQ@us.af.mil.