



"Tired of Pilot Pushing"

Fatigue is a Safety Issue that Refuses to Die

Since its founding 75 years ago, ALPA has worked to ensure that pilots are rested and ready to perform their jobs even during difficult economic times. The causes may change, but the effects of fatigue on safety and health remain.

In 1931, ALPA pilots' main focus was not on higher wages or pensions but on safety. The most egregious practice they faced was "pilot pushing," in which operators forced pilots to fly long hours in all kinds of weather to maintain the company's schedule. ALPA's motto became "Schedule With Safety" and it remains the foundation of the Association today.

Current U.S. federal rules setting flight-time/duty-time limits and minimum rest requirements are a patchwork of regulations that have been developed over the past 60 years. For example, the rules that are usually applied to air cargo operations (the supplemental rules) were developed more than 50 years ago for unscheduled freight operations using piston-powered airplanes.

Because the FAA's rules are inadequate and antiquated, they were frequently buttressed in the airline industry by collective bargaining agreements. However, such agreements affect only a part of the U.S. airline industry and do not result in uniform flight- and duty-time limits and rest requirements in all operations. This puts pressure on operators to reduce flightcrew rest in an insatiable drive to increase "productivity" and reduce workforce costs. This pressure has been particularly intense during the economic downturn of the airline industry. The NTSB recently recommended that the FAA modify its rules to address safety concerns.

Canadian aviation regulations are deficient in that they do not set any limit on the number of flying hours per day. They also permit extending the maximum flight duty day from 14 to 17 hours.

What Do Pilots Want? ALPA calls for updating airline flight/duty/rest practices based upon scientifically demonstrated human performance limitations, rather than on economic misperceptions. ALPA has petitioned the FAA for changes to the flight limitation rules several times and continues to press for modernization of the rules. The core principles ALPA seeks are:

- Minimum of 10 hours off duty in every 24-hour period, to allow for adequate sleep.
- Maximum scheduled duty period of 14 hours
- Established backside of the clock limits (Circadian Rhythm Disruption)
- Flight limit of 8 hours between rest periods

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