



Fact Sheet – Update on the FAA’s Call to Action to Enhance Airline Safety

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On June 15, 2009, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood and FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt hosted the first of 12 Call to Action meetings across the nation with airlines and unions to strengthen pilot hiring, training and performance, combat fatigue, as well as improve professional standards and discipline at both major and regional airlines.

Eighty two percent of U.S. air carriers representing 99 percent of the commercial fleet and seven pilot unions responded to the Call to Action with written commitments to implement best practices and to adhere to the highest professional standards. The FAA plans to meet with labor organizations in February to further refine our work. More than 98 percent of air carriers have or plan to implement a program to routinely monitor safety data to identify trends and precursor events.

The FAA is pursuing both rule changes and voluntary safety enhancements. Below is a snapshot of the aviation community’s progress, which is by no means finished. We will continue to aggressively push forward with these initiatives to raise the safety bar even higher.

Pilot Flight Time, Rest, and Fatigue

FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt has made the creation of new flight, duty, and rest rules based on fatigue science a high priority. The FAA is working on an aggressive timeline and will issue a new proposal this spring.

Almost immediately after joining the FAA in June 2009, Administrator Babbitt chartered an aviation rulemaking committee (ARC) of representatives from FAA, industry, and labor organizations to make recommendations for a science-based approach to fatigue management. Those recommendations were sent to Administrator Babbitt in September 2009.

The FAA last proposed updating the rules in 1995 but, based on industry comments, the rule was not adopted. Since then, the agency has reiterated the rules and kept pace with a changing industry by allowing airlines to use the latest fatigue mitigation techniques to enhance safety.

FAA Oversight

From June 24, 2009 to September 30, 2009, FAA inspectors conducted a two-part focused review of air carrier flight crewmember training, qualification, and management practices. The FAA inspected 85 air carriers to determine if they had systems to provide remedial training for pilots. The FAA did not inspect the 14 air carriers that have FAA-approved Advanced Qualification Programs (AQP) because AQP includes such a system. Seventy-six air carriers, including AQP carriers, had systems to comply with remedial training requirements. An additional 15 air carriers had some part of a remedial training system. At the time, there were nine air carriers that lacked any component of a remedial training program and received additional scrutiny. Since then, these air carriers have

developed remedial training for pilots. FAA inspectors observed a total of 2,419 training and checking events.

First, FAA inspectors met with air carriers' directors of operations, directors of safety, and company officials responsible for flight crewmember training and qualification programs. The purpose of these meetings was to determine the carrier's ability to identify, track, and manage low-time flight crewmembers and those who have failed evaluation events or demonstrated a repetitive need for additional training. Inspectors also looked at whether the carrier adopted the suggestions in Safety Alert for Operators (SAFO) 06015 to voluntarily implement remedial training for pilots with persistent performance deficiencies. The FAA has strongly encouraged carriers without such systems to establish them and has increased oversight for those air carriers.

Second, inspectors conducted additional inspections to revalidate that the carrier's training and qualification programs meet regulatory standards in accordance with FAA guidance materials. Inspectors confirmed that the programs review the entire performance history of any pilot in question, provide remedial training as necessary, and provide additional oversight by the certificate holder to ensure that performance deficiencies are effectively addressed and corrected.

Airline Contract Agreements

Many airlines are now taking steps to ensure that their smaller partner airlines adopt the larger airline's most effective safety practices. The Air Transport Association's Safety Council now includes safety directors from the National Air Carrier Association and the Regional Airline Association in their quarterly meetings. The agency is encouraging periodic meetings of the larger airlines and those they have contract agreements with to review Flight Operations Quality Assurance (FOQA) and Aviation Safety Action Programs (ASAP) data and to emphasize a shared safety philosophy.

Pilot Records

While Congress is working to amend the Pilot Records Improvement Act of 1996 and the FAA amends guidance to airlines, Administrator Babbitt asked that air carriers immediately implement a policy of asking pilot applicants to voluntarily disclose FAA records, including notices of disapproval for evaluation events. The airlines agreed to use best practices for pilot record checks to produce a more expansive search for all records available from a pilot's career. The expanded search includes all the records the FAA maintains on pilots in addition to the records airlines already receive from past employers. Of the 80 air carriers who responded to Administrator Babbitt on this issue, 53 air carriers (66 percent) reported that they already require full disclosure of a pilot applicant's FAA records. Another 15 percent plan to implement the same policy.

Professionalism & Experience Transfer

In February, the FAA will host a forum for labor organizations to further develop an action plan to improve professionalism and transfer of pilot experience. In the interim, these organizations have answered the Call to Action and support the establishment of professional standards and ethics committees, a code of ethics, and safety risk management meetings between FAA and major and regional air carriers.

FAA Administrator Babbitt very much favors mentoring as one way to raise professional standards and improve cockpit discipline. The FAA plans to continue to explore establishing joint strategic councils within a "family of carriers." This approach could lead to individual, as well as corporate mentoring relationships. The use of professional standards committee safety conferences could provide opportunities for two-way mentoring — a very good reminder that good ideas are not unique to larger mainline carriers. The FAA is also exploring mentoring possibilities between air carriers and university aviation programs.

FOQA and ASAP

The FAA routinely monitors airline industry data to identify precursors and trends to prevent future accidents. FAA Administrator Babbitt has strongly encouraged air carriers who have not done so, to establish two important

voluntary reporting programs: FOQA and ASAP to further improve training as well as enhanced operational and maintenance procedures.

Overall, air carriers operating 98 percent of the airplanes in the commercial fleet have or intend to implement ASAP and air carriers operating 94 percent of the airplanes in the commercial fleet have or intend to implement both ASAP and FOQA. Currently, 35 air carriers have FOQA programs, 11 of which were added since last July. They are: Air Wisconsin, American Eagle, Atlantic Southeast Airlines, Chautauqua, Compass Airlines, Empire Airlines, Executive Airlines, Horizon, Mountain Air Cargo, Republic, and Shuttle American. There are 77 approved ASAP programs covering pilots, mechanics, flight attendants, and dispatchers. Since July, Lynx Aviation, Mesa, and Empire Airlines have added ASAP programs.

FOQA collects and analyzes digital flight data from normal operations. Some air carriers may be too small or have too limited operations for FOQA programs to be practical.

ASAP encourages air carrier and repair station employees to voluntarily report safety information that may be critical to identifying potential precursors to accidents. Safety issues are resolved through corrective action rather than through punishment or discipline. An ASAP is based on a safety partnership that includes the FAA and the certificate holder, and usually includes a third party, such as a labor organization.

Pilot Qualifications

The FAA is committed to putting the best trained and prepared pilots in the cockpits of our nation's airlines. While increasing the number of flight hours may be part of the solution, it is not the sole factor for improving pilot performance. Pilots must have the quality, mission appropriate training and experience. The FAA is considering a broader scope of options.

The FAA has received public comments on a proposal to enhance traditional training programs for pilots and dispatchers by requiring the use of flight simulation training for pilots. However, that proposal did not address basic pilot certification.

The FAA will soon ask for public input on ways to enhance the existing pilot certification process. FAA Administrator Babbitt believes that the type of experience needed to truly improve pilot performance cannot be measured in flight hours alone. The focus also needs to be on the *quality* and *scope* of training and experience.

Pilot Training

As mentioned previously, the FAA issued a proposal last January to enhance training programs by requiring the use of simulation devices for pilots. More than 3,000 pages of comments were received. The FAA is now developing a supplemental proposal that will be issued this spring to allow the public to comment on revisions.

Based on the information from last summer's inspections, the FAA is drafting a Safety Alert for Operators (SAFO) with guidance material on how to conduct a comprehensive training program review in the context of a safety management system (SMS). A complimentary Notice to FAA inspectors will provide guidance on how to conduct surveillance. SMS aims to integrate modern safety risk management and safety assurance concepts into repeatable, proactive systems. SMS programs emphasize safety management as a fundamental business process in the same manner as other aspects of business management.

For a detailed fact sheet on pilot fatigue, go to http://www.faa.gov/news/fact_sheets/
(http://www.faa.gov/news/fact_sheets/)

For more information on SMS, go to <http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/sms/> (<http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/sms/>)

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