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ALPA Calls for One Level of Safety and Security for All Commercial Airline Pilots

Identifies Key Safety & Security Protections that Would Help Advance All-Cargo Operations

McLEAN, Va.— In a new [white paper](#) this week, the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA) detailed many sensible policy recommendations for rebuilding a strong, sustainable airline industry. In addition to advancing aviation safety and security for commercial passenger operations, ALPA also renewed efforts to achieve one level of safety for all-cargo pilots. While many of the same federal regulations are used for both commercial passenger and cargo airlines, lesser requirements used for all-cargo operations in several crucial areas, which results in unnecessary safety risks.

“Cargo airlines fly the same aircraft, take off from the same airports, utilize the same airspace, and fly over the same cities as passenger aircraft. However, there are many safety and security protections that are not extended to pilots operating all-cargo flights. This double standard has to change, and it has to change now,” said ALPA president Capt. Joe DePete.

One example of this safety double standard between cargo and passenger operations is pilot flight, duty, and rest regulations. While updated science-based flight- and duty-time regulations (Federal Aviation Regulation Part 117) for passenger operations were issued in 2011 and implemented in 2014, those rules apply only to pilots at passenger airlines and do not include all-cargo pilots. The Federal Aviation Administration’s original rule included all pilots—passenger and cargo operations—but the cargo sector was carved out by the Office of Management and Budget due to a flawed cost-benefit methodology.

“Cargo pilots’ contributions to aviation may have been overlooked for years, but during the COVID-19 pandemic, every single cargo pilot has demonstrated their indispensable role by delivering medical personnel, equipment, supplies, and now vaccines. Through their efforts they have kept supply chains open, fueling our industry’s contribution to the global economy. In addition, flight crews have helped their companies succeed by flying demanding schedules to potentially dangerous pandemic hotspots around the world,” added DePete.

In addition to urging lawmakers and regulators to enact cargo pilot fatigue legislation, ALPA has also focused efforts on gaining significant improvements in flight deck security, ramp security, and the federal standards related to the protection of cargo pilots’ health and well-being.

Other examples of safety gaps that all-cargo operations face:

- Many all-cargo aircraft lack intrusion-resistant cockpit doors.
- Animal handlers carrying large needles and tranquilizers lack proper security screening.
- Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting is not required at many airports during cargo aircraft operations.
- Some ramp areas used by cargo aircraft are not properly designated security identification display areas.

“All-cargo flying is some of the most challenging aviating that a pilot can do. ALPA will continue to work with various stakeholders to mitigate risks for pilots as well as make improvements to this important segment of the aviation industry,” said DePete.

Founded in 1931, ALPA is the largest airline pilot union in the world and represents over 59,000 pilots at 35 U.S. and Canadian airlines. Visit the ALPA website at alpa.org or follow us on Twitter: [@ALPAPilots](https://twitter.com/ALPAPilots).

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