

PASSING THE SAFE SKIES ACT

For decades, ALPA has advocated for “One Level of Safety” for the simple reason that all pilots and airline operations should be treated equally, regardless of payload or flight mission. While the 2011 FAA flight- and duty-time rules and minimum rest requirements (FAR 117) are a significant improvement over the previous rules established six decades ago, the “cargo carveout”—the rules only addressed passenger airlines and excluded all-cargo airline operations from mandatory compliance—threatens the safety of air transportation.

The FAA and DOT strongly believed during the rule-making process that all-cargo operations should be included as part of the policy. In fact, the proposed

rule said, “The FAA has decided against proposing special rules for all-cargo operations because there are no physiological differences between pilots who fly cargo planes and pilots who fly passenger planes.” Despite the policy position of the agency, a political determination to carve out cargo was based on a biased and faulty cost-benefit rationale by the Office of Management and Budget rather than on scientific fact.

As then National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Deborah Hersman said, expressing disappointment on the exclusion of cargo operations after the final rule was released, “A tired pilot is a tired pilot, whether there are 10 paying customers on board or 100, whether the payload is passengers or pallets.”

ACTION:

- › DOT should immediately ensure through regulatory action that the flight, duty, and rest requirements apply to all-cargo operations in the same manner as they do to passenger operations.
- › Congress should pass the Safe Skies Act to mandate that cargo operations meet the same standards of safety as airline passenger operations under FAR 117 and fulfill congressional intent for mandated, updated science-based rest rules for all airline pilots when it passed the Airline Safety and Federal Aviation Administration Extension Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-216).



ENSURING “ONE LEVEL OF SAFETY” FOR HAZARDOUS MATERIALS/DANGEROUS GOODS TRANSPORT

ALPA has long advocated for improved transport requirements for dangerous goods. Hoverboards, cell phones, and power banks bursting aflame inside passenger aircraft cabins illustrate how lithium batteries and other dangerous goods (aka hazardous materials) can create real safety threats in the absence of proper regulations and safety risk mitigations.

- › The significant consumer demand for this high-density power source has resulted in rapid expansion in lithium battery production, supply, and proliferation (knockoff batteries).

Consequently, this hazard is increasing exponentially. While lithium batteries represent a significant technological improvement over older battery technology, their high energy density and flammability make these batteries more prone to failure, resulting in fire, explosion, and exposure to toxic gases. The FAA has released videos of lithium battery tests, key to raising awareness for this aviation safety risk.

Mitigating dangerous goods incidents requires a focus on three specific areas: