

Committee Corner

News from ALPA's Committees

"Can I Get a Lift?"—A Jumpseat Update

For many airline pilots, jumpseating is a way of life. Some use it for commuting, while others use it primarily for pleasure travel.

After offline cockpit privileges were restricted in 2001, jumpseating became much harder and more restrictive because airline pilots were required to get a seat in the cabin. On full flights, we were no longer assured of getting boarded, as we had done for many decades.

The Air Transport Association, with the support of the FAA, the Transportation Security Administration, ALPA, and other airline industry organizations, worked tirelessly to develop the Cockpit Access Security System (CASS), which we have in place today for both online and offline jumpseating pilots and dispatchers to use.

Initially, only Continental, American, and United Parcel Service participated in the program. However, after an initial test and approval process, the other ATA-member airlines were authorized to implement the program. After the successful test among ATA-member airlines, the TSA opened the system in September 2005 to any airline that wished to participate—which is where we stand today.

As this issue goes to press, 40 U.S. airlines are participating in CASS. Your airline might not have a reciprocal jumpseat agreement with every CASS-participating airline, so you may not be able to ride in the cockpit on all 40 of those airlines. (See sidebar for list of participating airlines.)

One offline jumpseat limitation that is still in place is that offline jumpseaters cannot occupy a seat on the flight deck on any international flight (either departing from or arriving in the United States). This prohibition includes Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Jumpseating to any destination within the 50 U.S. states is not restricted. ALPA is working with the TSA to have this international restriction removed.

CASS has been working flawlessly since it was imple-

ALPA National Jumpseat Committee

mented. The CASS server receives around 70,000 approval requests per month, which is more than 2,300 per day!

Individual pilot group Jumpseat Committees, working with their managements, have been able to get their internal CASS servers and databases up and running with few delays. Once the initial teething pains and training issues are overcome, CASS generally works well.

A number of ALPA and non-ALPA airlines have negotiated, or generously offer, a policy involving unlimited, or multiple, jumpseats. Some of those airlines offer only reciprocal, multiple jumpseats, while others have a respond-in-kind policy (i.e., "We'll take all of your pilots who want to ride if you offer unlimited jumpseats to our pilots on your airline's flights").

This practice of unlimited jumpseaters, while applauded and enjoyed by many, is not without its faults. Agents can be overwhelmed by the number of jumpseat applicants and are sometimes unwilling to board all jumpseaters if it is close to departure time.

And having so many pilots vying for the captain's attention just before boarding is sometimes inconvenient. This situation makes it difficult for the captain to meet each jumpseater and for the jumpseater to personally thank the captain for the ride. Every pilot should remember the unwritten rules of jumpseating: be kind,

Welcome Aboard

The following airlines are currently using CASS to support their reciprocal jumpseat agreements:

ABX Air
Air Wisconsin
Alaska Air
Allegiant
Aloha
America West
American
American Eagle
ASTAR Air Cargo
ATA Airlines
Atlas Air
Chautauqua
Comair
Continental
Delta

ExpressJet
FedEx Express
Frontier
Hawaiian
Horizon
JetBlue
Kitty Hawk
Mesaba
Midwest
North American
Northwest
Piedmont
Pinnacle
Polar Air Cargo
PSA
Republic
Ryan International
Shuttle America
Skyway

SkyWest
Southwest
Spirit
United
UPS
US Airways
Xtra Airways

Airlines with CASS programs under development:

ASA
Centurion Air Cargo
Colgan
Empire
Evergreen
Gemini Air Cargo
Island Air
Kalitta Air
Mesa

Committee Corner

courteous, professional, and above all introduce yourself to the captain and thank him or her for the ride.

A number of pilots have expressed concern that many times they do not know the number of jumpseaters on their airplane because the jumpseaters were boarded late or did not come up to the flight deck individually before departure. Not only is visiting the flight deck before departure polite and professional, the captain's knowledge of who is aboard is crucial during an emergency. Obviously, the captain cannot request help from a jumpseater during an emergency if the captain does not know that a jumpseater is aboard. As the number of CASS-approved airlines continues to grow, this issue of jumpseaters making themselves known to the captain will persist.

Also, a number of recently hired pilots never jumpseated in the good old days before Sept. 11, 2001. As a result, they may not be aware of the unwritten rules and etiquette of jumpseating. All they know is what they have been told by agents and their own Jumpseat Committee

chairperson. These jumpseaters may erroneously believe that if the agent has given them a seat assignment, it is O.K. to bypass the cockpit and the traditional "asking the captain for the ride" before taking the seat in the cabin.

Rumors have been circulating about some ALPA pilots refusing to allow jumpseaters from select non-ALPA and low-cost airlines. Please do not let politics into the jumpseat. While you might feel good about having denied a jumpseater from a non-ALPA or low-cost airline, your ALPA brothers and sisters might be denied a much-needed jumpseat on one of those airlines while commuting to or from their base. Your actions can have implications far beyond the immediate situation. Also, ALPA's long-term goal is to represent the entire airline piloting profession—and that means every one of us is a field organizer for our union. A jumpseat is one more opportunity to educate and influence our non-ALPA brothers and sisters.—*Second Officer Dan Gradwohl (Northwest), Chairman, ALPA National Jumpseat Committee*

Pilot Monitoring

Spotlight shines on Pilot Assistance programs.

Feeling low? Stressed? Having problems with your spouse, kids, money? Do family, friends, and activities that used to bring you pleasure no longer help? Do you face problems for which you can see no ready solutions?

Addiction, financial problems, marital difficulties, medical issues, trauma (work-related or otherwise), and bereavement can all cause a personal crisis. Feelings of stress, depression, helplessness, frustration, or irritability are normal human reactions to stressful situations. Any person can be temporarily overwhelmed and need support. Despite our natural tendency as pilots to believe that we can control all of life's events with the same aplomb with which we manage our airplane, instances arise in which the help of a peer may be of significant value.

The underlying premise of the ALPA Pilot Assistance (PA) program is that each professional pilot is a responsible, intelligent individual. Therefore, when performance becomes an issue, it usually has an underlying cause. PA strives to deal with the cause, not just the effects, of negative feelings or behavior.

ALPA's pilot assistants are trained to help a troubled pilot recognize his or her problems and take corrective actions. Responsive peer assistance is most effective when an affected pilot is motivated to take action and ask for help. Sometimes we pilots are too handicapped by our problems to seek help. At other times, we may behave defensively or deny the reality of the situation. Self-esteem may also be involved, causing pilots to avoid asking for support. People in difficult circumstances may need help


and, in some cases, may require interventive peer help.

The Canadian Air Line Pilots Association (CALPA) founded the PA Committee in the 1960s initially to deal with addiction issues. Using skills learned in dealing with addictive behaviors, PA evolved into a committee of pilot volunteers trained to help pilots with all kinds of problems. Because of the sensitive nature of this work, strict confidentiality is maintained on all cases, and the Committee keeps no records or statistics. Most cases are handled quietly at the local level, so the network is "transparent."

How Pilot Assistance is different

Except in cases of alcohol or drug interventions, or in dealing with a person who is in a crisis situation, the basic PA technique is noninterventive. The techniques that a Pilot Assistant uses include listening closely to a fellow pilot in need, "mirroring" the facts as the pilot assistant heard them, and restating what she or he has been told to make the facts of the matter clear to both speaker and listener. Using the listening skills honed in training and over years of practice, the pilot assistant is able to ask gently probing ques-

PA Mission

The mission of the Pilot Assistance Committee is to provide confidential assistance to any pilot having difficulty in any aspect of his or her professional or personal life that may affect job performance or professionalism. The PAC member is trained and ready to help any pilot maintain his or her position on the flight deck. 

PA Committee Members

The Pilot Assistance Committee consists of pilots dedicated and trained to identify and support pilots with problems that affect or may affect their abilities, job performance, and quality of life. They are trained peers who act as referral agents for persons who may need professional help. Pilot assistants do not take responsibility for solving problems; those being helped must do that for themselves. The pilot assistants provide guided conversation to help a pilot find his or her own solutions. The PA also provides a link to the necessary resources and sometimes follows up to ensure the other pilot remains on track.

The responsibilities of a pilot assistant include the following:

- Provide peer support to fellow pilots who have lifestyle problems.
- Act as a referral agent in directing the pilot to the appropriate professional resource.
- Hold the entire matter in the strictest of confidence.
- Be aware that the constructive purpose of Pilot Assistance can easily be defeated through inept use of its prerogatives. In this light, extreme tact, discretion, and restraint must be used.
- Be aware that no records are kept.

By exercising these responsibilities, a pilot assistant will allow fellow pilots to link with the resources they need, and in doing so, help maintain the high standards required of the profession. 🌐

tions to enable the pilot to see other angles of the problem. Often, the troubled pilot will work through the situation as he or she talks with the pilot assistant. When the problems are clearly articulated, possible solutions become more evident. The conversation is guided in that the pilot, not the pilot assistant, does the work of figuring out solutions. If necessary, the pilot assistant can refer the caller to outside professionals or to the airline's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

What about the pilot who may have a gambling problem or some other kind of addictive disorder? What about someone who just might need a little guidance in figuring out life problems that are sometimes overwhelming? These folks frequently "fall through the cracks" without someone specifically trained to assist or refer them to the help that they need. The pilot assistant can often serve as that person.

Pilot assistant training

Pilot assistants are trained in a carefully designed, residential program that mixes theory with hours of practical training and skill-building simulated experiences.

Hands-on training and exposure to one-on-one techniques are presented to the PA trainee in a quiet, secluded environment. This training lasts a few days, usually beginning on a Monday evening and ending on Thursday morning. It is designed to be one-time-only training, but pilots are invited back any time they choose for recurrent training or for personal retreat and renewal. ALPA currently pays the cost of the training, including room and board (flight-pay loss remains the responsibility of the pilot's MEC).

The annual PA Health and Rehab training seminar held in November provides training in chemical dependency

ALPA National Pilot Assistance Committee

issues, including setting up and handling interventions, spotting symptoms, dealing with recovery-related problems, and working with relapses and preventing relapses. This is an excellent resource and complements the already well-established HIMS (Human Intervention and Motivation Study) program.

The Health and Rehab training, like the Basic PA training, has limited group size to allow each participant the opportunity for hands-on practice in a quiet and confidential environment. The participants each have an opportunity to practice under the supervision of the ALPA instructor, Brian Murray of Humanitas in Toronto.

For more information on the Committee's training, please contact the PA chairman at PilotAssistChr@alpa.org.

Building a Pilot Assistance Committee

Many Human Performance volunteers across ALPA have already taken the Basic PA training. If an MEC's Aeromedical, HIMS team, or CIRP Committee members have this training, they can form a "core" PA team.

The size of a PA Committee depends entirely on the need of the MEC with respect to both utilization and cost.

In a single base, enough volunteers are needed to handle all callers, but not so many that the volunteers are underutilized. For a airline of 1,500 or fewer pilots, 10–12 trained PA volunteers can handle many Human Performance needs.

For an active drug/alcohol rehab program, one volunteer per two or three recovering pilots works well, depending upon how monthly meetings are structured.

These suggested numbers will vary according to the specific needs and functions of your pilot group. The most desirable number of volunteers will be determined by each MEC according to its historical usage and budgetary constraints. Each ALPA MEC may choose the committee structure that best fits its culture and budget. —*Capt. Nancy Novaes, National PA Committee Chairwoman*