

ALPA UNVEILS ITS

SAFETY & SECURITY PRIORITIES

On Feb. 2, 2009, ALPA put the world on notice that the

Association has set its top priorities for airline safety and security for the coming year in accordance with the directive of ALPA's BOD. ALPA's



PHOTOS: WILLIAM A. FORD

president, Capt. John Prater, kicked off a well-attended briefing for reporters including *USA Today*, the Associated Press, CNN, *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, Fox National News, *Aviation Daily*, Bloomberg Financial News, CNN, *The Washington Post*, and *Air Transport World* in Washington, D.C., explaining why and how the Association has been committed to

enhancing aviation safety and security for

generations. ■ The next several pages detail ALPA's positions on these important concerns and the messages that ALPA's leaders delivered to reporters. ▶▶▶



Setting the Bar for '09

Pilot fatigue, aviation safety reporting programs, and enhanced crewmember screening are among the top issues on ALPA's list

Remarks by ALPA's president, Capt. John Prater

ALPA members—all professional airline flightcrew members—are confident, decisive, responsible, and courageous leaders. They fly complex, high-performance airliners into every region of the world, transporting millions of passengers and thousands of tons of cargo safely every day. The professionalism of airline pilots was evidenced last month in New York in what has been hailed as “the miracle on the Hudson.”

But ALPA members do more—much more.

They confidently champion airline pilots' top safety issues at local, national, and international levels:

- Our in-house training, combined with the breadth of experience represented by the ALPA membership, means an ALPA pilot provides what you can't find from any representative of any other organization—a view of safety and security issues through the eyes of line pilots and achievable solutions in the real world.
- We work with airlines, manufacturers, airports, government agencies, international regulatory bodies, and other aviation stakeholders.
- We participate in Aviation Rulemaking Committees and other government/industry standard-setting groups, testifying on Capitol Hill and Canada's Parliament Hill.
- We spearhead initiatives with the International Federation of Air Line Pilots Associations and the International Civil Aviation Organization, which is

the aviation arm of the United Nations.

Long hailed as the conscience of the airline industry, ALPA members continuously dedicate themselves to improving your safety and security throughout the U.S. and Canadian national airspace systems and, in fact, the rest of the world.

ALPA's reputation in the airline industry and its strength as a labor union give pilots the foundation and confidence

- to make sound decisions under pressure,
- to say, “No, I will not take this flight—it's not safe,” and exercise their captain's authority when it's needed the most, and
- to stand shoulder-to-shoulder, speaking with one voice, demonstrating with words and actions that ALPA members epitomize leadership every day, on every flight.

In keeping with that spirit of passionate involvement and service to our members and the traveling public, the purpose of our media briefing today is to present our aviation safety and security priorities for 2009.

Pilot fatigue

A couple of years ago, we surveyed our members and of those who responded, 62.8 percent of our members reported that they or pilots they flew with were fatigued at the end of one or more of their trips during the previous four-month period.

No industry was hit harder by the 9/11 terrorist attacks than the U.S. airline industry. To keep our airlines in business, we pilots either voluntarily made major contract concessions or had them forced on us by bankruptcy court judges. These concessions resulted in many of our members working at or near regulatory limits for flight time and duty time. We're talking about 16-hour duty days [17 hours in Canada]



WILLIAM A. FORD

A reporter from Cox television interviews Capt. Prater.

for many domestic airline pilots—even longer with some ultra-long-range international flights. And remember, too, that the duty day of an airline pilot can be what most people would consider “all night long.”

Scientists who study fatigue and sleep deprivation have documented such sobering facts as these:

- being awake for 17 hours or longer impairs mental alertness and cognition as much as having a blood alcohol level of 0.05 percent, which is illegal to fly,
- building up a cumulative sleep deficit over just a few days requires multiple nights of adequate sleep to effect a full recovery, and
- tired people—even highly trained pilots—may not be good judges of just how fatigued they are.

But the current FAA regulations regarding maximum flight time, maximum duty time, and minimum required rest have not been changed significantly since before the airline

jet age began in the late 1950s.

In fact, some airliners being flown now can fly for more than 20 hours without refueling. ALPA has worked closely with the airline industry and the FAA to develop new operations specifications for these ultra-long-range, or ULR, operations. But several airlines with ULR flights have sued the FAA to block implementation of this new ops spec.

So what do we want?


To address the problem of pilot fatigue, ALPA advocates for adequate rest periods, reasonable duty periods, and special provisions for flying on what we call “the back side of the clock” (i.e., between midnight and 6 a.m., when the human body most needs sleep) and for crossing multiple time zones. Any regulations developed to deal with fatigue should

- be based on science,

BOD Strategic Priority Mandates

ALPA's Board of Directors mandated a number of strategic priorities during its historic October 2008 meeting. Among those priorities were recommendations from Delegate Committees 3 and 5.

Specifically:

- Delegate Committee 3: To promote and implement those ALPA strategic priorities that advance and protect our profession in One Level of Safety, One Level of Security, and One Level of Flight Time Duty Time.
- Delegate Committee 5: ALPA must elevate its communications efforts to the news media, on Capitol Hill, Parliament Hill, and in industry forums, and must regularly communicate to the membership regarding these activities.... ALPA must continue to be the authoritative voice of the piloting profession. 

- apply to all sizes of aircraft operators, and
- address passenger and all-cargo airlines equally.

Fatigue risk management systems should complement, not be used as a

substitute for, a regulatory framework for flight- and duty-time limits and minimum rest periods.

ALPA also is urging Congress to pass the FAA reauthorization legislation, which, among other critical actions to improve aviation safety, directs the FAA to arrange for a study on pilot fatigue. The study would be conducted by the National Academy of Sciences and include an examination of recommendations made by the NTSB and NASA. I will testify before the House Aviation Subcommittee on this critical issue later this month.


ALPA on Fatigue: It's Pilot Enemy No. 1

Want to know more about ALPA's position on various aspects of pilot fatigue, flight-time and duty-time limitations, and minimum rest requirements?

Visit the ALPA members-only website, Crewroom.alpa.org, and click on the box near the top of the page labeled “Committees.” Click on “Flight

Time/Duty Time.” Select from

- “Principles,” which includes ALPA flight-time/duty-time policy, as published in the ALPA *Administrative Manual*,
- “Guide to FT/DT Limitations,” a highly useful guide to dealing with everyday situations that occur in flying the line that you can download in a 49-page Jeppesen format,
- “Fatigue Resources,”
- “Library,” or
- “International.”

Whether you're looking for general principles or hard numbers (e.g., ALPA's specific goals for annual, quarterly, monthly, weekly, and daily block-time and duty-time limits, which vary by number of flightcrew members, number of trip segments, window of circadian low [2–6 a.m.], aircraft category, and more), it's all there, waiting for you. 

Pilot input critical

In this and so many other airline safety and security issues, line pilot involvement is critically important. As the frontline professionals who make the U.S. and Canadian airline industry work every day and every night of the year, we're the ones who know what works and what doesn't, and what the unintended consequences of new technology and proposed changes to procedures might be before they occur, and certainly as soon as they happen. We're the ones with the view through the forward-looking windows. When in doubt, ask us. 