



Strategic Safety Initiative

The Regional Airline Association and its member airlines are launching a Strategic Safety Initiative to study and recommend actions responsive to challenges facing the airline industry. This initiative has four elements.

1. Review Safety Procedures

The Regional Airline Association will form a task force comprised of safety directors and operations directors from the regional airlines to review safety procedures, giving particular attention to issues or procedures cited by the NTSB as a contributing factor to any accident.

2. Study Impact of Fatigue

RAA will commission a study to look at the impact of fatigue and other human factors on pilot performance. The study will be conducted by an independent and expert organization, in all likelihood a university with a respected aviation program. The study will be framed by a Strategic Safety Advisory Board comprised of industry experts drawn from the ranks of academia, industry, and safety regulators.

3. Fatigue Awareness Management Program

The Regional Airline Association will create a fatigue awareness management program for use by its member airlines.

4. Recommendations

We are committed to working with all industry stakeholders including government agencies, Congress and labor to determine ways we can improve safety:

a. Create a Single Database of Pilot Records

Requiring the FAA to maintain a single, integrated database of pilot records would provide airlines with critical, real-time information about pilot qualifications and performance, thereby improving the process of recruiting, hiring, and training new pilots. Airlines currently reference multiple databases during the hiring process.

b. Conduct Random Fatigue Tests

RAA recommends exploring with FAA and all industry stakeholders the concept of random fatigue tests on pilots to help ensure that pilots are indeed rested before flying.

c. Examine Commuting

We believe it would be prudent for Congress, working with all stakeholders, to examine commuting in depth, including the possibility of limiting commuting time prior to beginning a work assignment.

d. Extend Background-Check Timeframe

Under current law, an airline conducting a background check on a pilot can only review the last five years of the pilot's safety records, qualifications, and training. Extending the review period from five to 10 years will help airlines identify safety risks.

e. Audit Cockpit Voice Recordings

Currently, cockpit voice recordings can be reviewed only as an accident investigation tool. Yet, an initiative permitting safety experts to conduct random audits to track trends and mine data could provide valuable information before an accident occurs.

f. Improve Tracking and Analysis of Check Rides

Though every airline pilot is required to pass frequent check-rides during their service, the FAA and the airlines may be able to increase the level of safety through more detailed analysis of this testing over the entirety of a pilot's career. By working with regulators and the employee groups, the industry may develop a better methodology for assessing pilot performance and instituting remedial training programs that will ensure a higher level of safety.