



# TEAMSTERS AVIATION PROFESSIONAL

Newsletter of the Teamsters Aviation Mechanics Coalition

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## TAMC Releases Allegiant Air Maintenance Report

In February 2014 the TAMC was approached by Teamster pilots from Allegiant Air who were concerned by the number of air returns and diversions due to maintenance-related issues. After consideration, the TAMC agreed to launch an investigation.

From the outset it became evident that finding published information on these incidents was going to be a daunting task. Searches of the NTSB and FAA websites revealed no reports of declared emergencies for engine or hydraulic failures reported by local news. Allegiant is not required to report DOT delay and cancellation information because it falls below one percent of the total domestic scheduled-service passenger revenue. The TAMC had to rely on pilots reporting back when they experienced an air return, gate return, aborted takeoff or other maintenance-related incident.

The report summary includes nearly 30 incidents during the months of September and October of 2014 alone. The TAMC cannot conclude that the maintenance issues in the report account for all air returns, gate returns and low speed aborts as the company does not report such incidents to the FAA. Further, we find it very disconcerting that an airline with such a small fleet has experienced such a large number of schedule disruptions due to mechanical issues.

In its interviews with pilots and mechanics at Allegiant, the TAMC found reports of inadequate maintenance training, technology failures, a lack of reliable spare parts, inadequate tooling and equipment, and a "just move the metal" culture that pressures mechanics to quickly move aircraft to the next station.

To conclude, the lack of experience, parts,

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## Back On The Hill



## TAMC Continues Push for Single Drug Testing Standard, Moratorium

Members representing the TAMC were on Capitol Hill the week of February 9th to further the Coalition's agenda on drug testing at foreign repair stations and a moratorium on certifications of new repair stations. On February 11th TAMC Chairman Chris Moore and Bob Fisher had meetings with Matthew McCarthy, Legislative Assistant for Transportation for Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA), and Chris Brown, Staff Director of the House Subcommittee on Aviation.

The meetings were set up to continue discussions on drug testing at foreign repair stations and the moratorium on certifications of any new repair stations going forward. The TAMC started the conversation on these issues in 2014 and will continue to work to have them addressed during FAA Reauthorization which is set to expire in September of 2015.

Driving the TAMC position on drug testing at foreign repair stations is the disparity between how drug and alcohol testing for safety sensitive positions are treated in other countries versus the U.S. In the U.S., "No Notice" DOT testing is conducted as a deterrent to substance abuse, but in many countries testing is only conducted for cause. The TAMC understands that the U.S. cannot dictate which laws or civil liberties are in place in countries where U.S. aircraft are maintained, but the FAA can require that U.S. Registered Air Carriers only use vendors that conform to the same standards for testing as those within our borders.

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## Airline Division Partners With Industry & Unions, Reports Unfair Subsidies to Gulf Nation Carriers

**O**n March 5, the Teamsters Airline Division joined three U.S. airlines and other labor unions in releasing a 55-page report documenting \$42 billion in government subsidies and unfair benefits provided to Qatar Airways, Etihad Airways and Emirates Airline in direct violation of U.S. Open Skies policy. The paper was released by American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, United Airlines, the Air Line Pilots Association, the Allied Pilots Association, and the Association of Professional Flight Attendants, along with the Teamsters Airline Division.

The airlines and labor organizations also announced the launch of a new coalition, the Partnership for Open & Fair Skies, dedicated to restoring a level playing field to international air travel. The Partnership supports the U.S. Open Skies policy and the airline members recently presented the white paper to the U.S. government, calling on the Obama administration to open consultations under the Open Skies agreements with Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to address the flow of subsidized capacity to the United States, and requesting a freeze on new passenger service during the consultations.

Evidence gathered during a global two-year investigation and documented in the report shows that Qatar Airways, Etihad Airways and Emirates have received \$42 billion in subsidies and other unfair benefits from their respective governments since 2004. Every international roundtrip flight that is foregone or lost by U.S. airlines due to unfair competition with these three massively-subsidized state-owned carriers results in an average net loss of more than 800 U.S. jobs. Qatar Airways, Etihad Airways and Emirates have indicated they plan to expand rapidly into the U.S. market.

“These airlines aren’t playing by the rules,” said Capt. David Bourne, Teamsters Airline Division Director. “The U.S. government needs to take action on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of U.S. airline industry employees whose jobs will be in jeopardy if these unfair practices are allowed to continue.”

“When the United States created Open Skies agreements more than 30 years ago, they were built on the principle of fair competition in the marketplace,” added Capt. Tim Canoll, president of the Air Line Pilots Association.

The Open Skies agreements with Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, signed in 2001 and 2002, respectively, permit the United States to request consultations relating to the agreements at any time. In this case, the process would provide a forum to review the airlines’ claims that they operate without state financial support.

More information on the issue, as well as the report, may be found on the Partnership’s website: [www.openandfairskies.com](http://www.openandfairskies.com).

## Back On The Hill

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The TAMC demand for a moratorium on new repair station certifications stems from three Inspector General Reports over a ten year period criticizing the FAA for lack of oversight of repair stations. The TAMC first brought this to the attention of Administrator Huerta in January of 2014 and had continuing correspondence with Associate Administrator Gilligan throughout the spring of 2014. The FAA maintains that the problems can be addressed through additional training for the A.S.I.s (Aviation Safety Inspectors) and the introduction of a new Safety Assurance System. While the TAMC applauds the FAA’s efforts to ensure more effective oversight over the last decade, history has proven the efforts ineffective.

Therefore, in the interest of aviation safety, the TAMC will continue to pressure the FAA to impose a moratorium on certifications of any new repair stations until there is proof of better oversight.

Additional information may be found at [www.teamsterair.org/tamc](http://www.teamsterair.org/tamc) or at <https://www.oig.dot.gov>.

## TAMC Releases Allegiant Air Maintenance Report

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tooling and training combined with the age of the fleet is creating a dangerous paradigm that could eventually lead to an accident resulting in serious injury and loss of life. TAMC recommendations include more onsite FAA oversight; more FAA oversight of MRO facilities performing work for Allegiant; company investments in required IT to improve access to manuals and training; proper equipment in working order and training on such equipment, among other solutions.

To read the full report summary, go to <http://ibt.io/allegiant-mx>.

Allegiant Air is an FAA-certified, ultra low-cost carrier operating a fleet of 70 aircraft with an average age of 22.2 years. The carrier employs approximately 1,800 people, including roughly 230 mechanics. Allegiant pilots and dispatchers are members of the Teamsters Airline Division.

## What the Pilot Shortage Means for Our Industry and Our Craft



It began as a typical landing, and the approach was ordinary. The first officer was in control and although he had only been with the carrier for a short time, he felt confident enough to land the aircraft. The pilot was busy with other duties and was unaware of the speed of the aircraft. Everything seemed normal on the flight deck when suddenly the stick shaker indicating a stall warning came to life. The first officer made an attempt to correct the warning but did not react quickly enough to prevent another warning. The pilot, new to the left seat himself, took over the aircraft and attempted to recover the aircraft before it was too late.

After investigation, lack of experience with the two crew members was determined to be the cause of this recent incident. But there is another underlying reason.

### The Pilot Shortage

A shortage of qualified pilots has hit U.S. airlines and in some cases this shortage has come sooner than expected. The cause: the Airline Safety and FAA Extension Act of 2010, triggered by the February 12, 2009 Colgan Air Flight 3407 crash in Buffalo, New York. Following a series of mistakes by the flight crew, Flight 3407 fell nearly vertical, hitting a house and exploding on impact. Under public pressure and an investigation that focused on the inexperience of the flight crew, Congress enacted the Airline Safety and

FAA Extension Act.

The Act increased the number of flight hours needed to fly commercially from 250 to 1,500. Along with that, changes in the duty time limits for pilots stretched an already thinned workforce.

Compounding the change in training requirements is the lifetime work limitations for aged pilots. Since 1959, the mandatory retirement age had been 60. This changed on July 15, 2009 when the FAA issued a Final Rule that raised the mandatory retirement age from 60 to 65.

This Final Rule reflects the requirements of the Fair Treatment for Experienced Pilots Act, which was signed by President Bush on December 13, 2007. Even with the 5-year retirement age increase, over the next decade around half of America's 54,000 pilots will age out of the profession.

### A Lack of Replacements

Despite the lure of becoming a professional pilot and a vast number of openings expected at all airlines, pilot schools and programs have reported fewer participants willing to enter and complete the expensive program. The military, which once served as a pipeline to the airlines for experience pilots, has become another hurdle as fewer military pilots are joining commercial service. An increasing number of those pilots currently serving in the armed forces are

making it a career, taking advantage of the guaranteed pension – something that commercial carriers have sought to cut or eliminate recent years. The military has also dramatically reduced the need for pilots and pilot training except for drone pilots who are now in high demand.

By contrast, the unfortunately growing MRO trend and resultant shortage of 121 airline mechanics could presumably be back-filled by farming work out. While any airline mechanic can explain the risks involved with this idea, vendor maintenance is the common solution for carriers. There is no such outside service to help with the pilot shortage and the effects will likely be more damaging to the regional airlines who no longer have a pool of readily available applicants. Currently, more and more flights are canceled due to a lack of pilots. Most of these cancellations are regional flights.

### Solutions?

While there are a number of ideas floating around to help reduce the shortage, an unexpected ally in keeping the flights safe has become the mechanics. Specifically, 121 Teamster mechanics like yourself.

Returning to the recent flight incident described above, as soon as the pilot took over the controls, he quickly realized the speed and attitude were dangerously outside the profiles needed to safely land the aircraft. He made some extreme corrections and fortunately the flight controls and throttles responded as commanded. The pilot made a recovery in time to safely land the aircraft. Thanks to the well-maintained air machine and some solid flying, there were no injuries, no damage, and the passengers were virtually unaware of what might have happened.

The pilot shortage is real and is upon many of us now. This makes our jobs as reliable professional mechanics even more important than ever before. Please be sure to double-check your work, and follow all maintenance manuals. A well-maintained and properly functioning aircraft is the best help we can lend to this growing crisis.



## HEARING CONSERVATION AND AUDIOMETRIC MONITORING IN THE WORKPLACE



**N**oise, or unwanted sound, is one of the most pervasive occupational health problems. Exposure to high levels of noise causes hearing loss and may cause other harmful health effects as well. The extent of damage depends primarily on the intensity of the noise and the duration of the exposure. Noise-induced hearing loss can be temporary or permanent. Temporary hearing loss results from short-term exposures to noise, with normal hearing returning after a period of rest. Prolonged exposure to high noise levels over a period of time can gradually cause permanent damage. OSHA's hearing conservation program is designed to protect workers with significant occupational noise exposures from hearing impairment even if they are subject to such noise exposures over their entire working lifetimes.

The OSHA Noise Standard is found within the occupational safety and health regulation, 29 CFR 1910.95. In paragraph (c) of the Noise Standard, the employer is required to establish a hearing conservation program for all employees whose exposure is equal to or above 85 decibels (dB), measured as an 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA) – the action level. Paragraph (d) requires employers to conduct monitoring and noise surveys to identify noisy areas or equipment and to determine which employees are at or above the action level. Additionally, employees exposed at or above the action level must be notified of their noise exposure level.

Audiometric testing must be made available at no cost to all employees who are exposed to noise levels at the 85 dB action level or above. Paragraph (g)(5) and (g)(6) of the OSHA standard provides that employers must provide employees exposed at or above the action level with a baseline and annual audiogram respectively to determine whether the employee has sustained a Standard Threshold Shift (STS) or a change in hearing threshold. An STS is relative to the baseline audiogram and is defined as an average change of 10 dB or more at 2000, 3000 and 4000 hertz (Hz) in either ear.

There are a number of purposes for audiograms and the audiometric testing program. Audiograms help to determine a worker's hearing status and to identify greater than normal hearing loss – meaning greater than what would be expected from the normal aging process. Audiograms also help to identify those workers who are not getting adequate protection from noise on the job, which indicates that hearing protection levels and/or devices need to be reevaluated. The

number one purpose of the audiometric testing program should be to identify those people who are losing hearing so the employer can take steps to prevent further hearing loss via better engineering/administrative controls and/or PPE. Audiometric testing does not protect anyone's hearing, however, it does provide an indication of how well the employer's hearing conservation program is working. Therefore, it is a key component of the hearing conservation program.

A licensed or certified audiologist, otolaryngologist, or other physician must be responsible for the hearing conservation program. Both professionals and trained technicians may conduct audiometric testing. The professional in charge of the program does not have to be present when a qualified technician conducts tests. As a part of audiometric screening, employees may be asked to fill out a health questionnaire in which they disclose health information about prior ear problems, smoking history, noise producing hobbies, and/or work-related exposure to ototoxic chemicals (e.g. carbon monoxide, toluene, xylene, lead compounds, etc.). However, questions pertaining to unrelated health issues (e.g. diabetes, sleep apnea, HIV status, etc.) are not required and are not a part of an OSHA-approved hearing conservation program.

When determining work relatedness, paragraph 1910.95(g)(8)(ii) is clear that, for the purposes of OSHA's Noise Standard, only a physician can make the determination that a standard threshold shift is or is not work-related. Employers are not required to initiate the follow-up procedures set forth in paragraph 1910.95(g)(8) if a physician determines the STS is not work-related (i.e. neither caused by nor contributed to occupational noise exposure).

Employers must keep noise exposure measurement records for two years and maintain records of audiometric test results for the duration of the affected employee's employment. Audiometric test records must include the employee's name and job classification, date, examiner's name, date of the last acoustic or exhaustive calibration, measurements of the background sound pressure levels in audiometric test rooms, and the employee's most recent noise exposure measurement.

*The above information was obtained from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Noise Standard, OSHA interpretation letters, and The Noise Manual, 5th Edition.*

## NEGOTIATIONS ROUNDUP

### ExpressJet

Local 210 Lead Negotiator Bob Luciano and Airline Division International Representative Chris Moore met the week of February 23 with ExpressJet COO Alex Marren and new Vice President of Maintenance Bob Madigan to discuss the status of negotiations.

The talks were wide ranging and included the current state of the regional industry, 50-seat aircraft, management changes at ExpressJet, the future of the carrier, and how these issues relate to the future of the carrier. Both sides also discussed how these issues relate to the stalled negotiations between the carrier's mechanic groups and stock clerks who remain separate units without a joint contract. It was agreed that the sides would plan future meetings to look forward to in the hopes of finding a way to successfully negotiate an agreement while preserving the integrity of jobs for the membership.

The union brought up the lack of an interim agreement for the stock clerks that provides them protection and union representation in the grievance process in cases of lost pay and termination. In a sign of good faith, the company signed the agreement which is now in place. Dates for future meetings will be announced as soon as they are agreed upon.

### NetJets

The Negotiating Committee for NetJets technicians did not meet in direct negotiations with the company the week of January 23rd. However, Local 284 Principal Officer Paul Suffuletto and IBT International Representative Capt. Paul Alves had a "status" discussion with NetJets VP for Labor Relations Mike Maratto and NetJets Labor Relations Representative Jim Johnson. The conversation was frank, transparent and productive as the parties discussed possible paths for making headway regarding the challenges of successfully going forward with negotia-

tions. The Negotiating Committee continued to prepare proposals on January 20th through the 22nd.

The company passed counter proposals electronically on Article 16 (Holidays) and Article 26 (Furlough and Recall). The union countered Article 16 electronically. The union and the company are working to set dates for the next round of talks.

### UAL

The negotiations committee met in Houston the week of January 12th to review and finalize a proposal to the company as mandated by the mediator. The committee worked through both days and was able to complete all but two items: Health and Welfare and Pension.

Regarding Health and Welfare, the committee was presented with a proposal from TeamCare, which could lower overall costs and maintain the overall maintenance of benefits for the membership. However, there were still some questions the committee wanted answered from TeamCare so a meeting was set up for February 4th.

Regarding the pension proposal, there were several questions about changes in regulations since the proposal was first formulated two years ago. The committee had these questions answered on February 5th. Following the two-day question and answer session, the negotiating committee is finalizing its comprehensive proposal and will present it to the mediator.

On February 3rd, the Benefits Committee convened at the offices of Cheiron in Chicago to review the TeamCare proposal. The Benefits Committee spent the previous two weeks reviewing the proposal and the corresponding plan documents. The Benefits Committee spent all day on February 3rd dissecting the proposal with the help of benefits actuary Gaelle Gravot to prepare questions for the meeting with TeamCare on February 4th.

On February 4th both the Benefits and the Negotiating Committees met at

the offices of TeamCare in Rosemont, Ill. TeamCare made a presentation to the group explaining what they could offer the group as well as the size and health of the fund. Currently, TeamCare provides insurance to close to 500,000 people and has 21.5 months of funding in reserve. What that means is that if every company in the fund stopped contributing, TeamCare would be able to provide benefits for 21.5 months. The presentation continued until lunch. After lunch, both committees asked questions of TeamCare representatives until the end of the day. It was determined that there were still questions and so both committees returned on February 5th to get more answers.

TeamCare had responses to the outstanding questions prepared for the group that morning. After receiving those answers, the Benefits Committee met with the assistance of Gaelle Gravot and attorney Ed Gleason. The committee discussed the proposal until right before lunch. Both committees then met and discussed the findings of the Benefits Committee. At the end of the discussion, given that the overall benefits provided were better and the cost was lower, the Benefits Committee unanimously recommended to the rank-and-file Negotiating Committee that they adopt the TeamCare proposal. The rank-and-file committee discussed the findings and recommendations of the Benefits Committee. When it appeared that all questions were asked, one of the rank-and-file committee members called the question. The vote was taken and there was no opposition to the recommendation of the Benefits Committee. Before the proposal was adopted, a couple of committee members asked that all representatives except for the thirteen voting members recuse themselves. The thirteen members then met and again the recommendation of the Benefits Committee was overwhelmingly adopted without opposition.

Accordingly, the TeamCare proposal

## NEGOTIATIONS ROUNDUP continued

was added to the comprehensive proposal given to mediator McGuckin on Monday, February 9th.

For those members in an HMO in California, Hawaii, Denver and Chicago, TeamCare will be replicating those plans so there will be nothing new except for whatever the final cost share ends up being. For everyone else, the proposal is for a non-grandfathered plan that is similar to the MM100 plan offered by TeamCare with coverage provided mostly by Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Non-grandfathered plans are subject to regulations of the ACA so that is why there are differences from the MM100 plan. It was deemed by the committee that it would be better to move forward with the non-grandfathered plan as it provides more benefits to the membership. To see the plan documents for MM100, go to <http://ibt.io/teamcare> and use code MA. The committee was informed that 95 percent of all hospitals and 91 percent of

doctors are in network. To see if your doctor participates, go to <http://ibt.io/TCprovider>.

The Benefits Committee was then excused and thanked for their diligence. At that point there were several clarifying questions to Ed Gleason about the committee's pension proposal. In the end there were no changes recommended to the pension proposal made in November of 2013.

The committee then worked towards putting the finishing touches on the comprehensive proposal. As stated above, this work is complete and the proposal was forwarded to mediator McGuckin on February 9th. It is believed that once the mediator reviews this proposal the parties will reconvene.

### UPS

To date, 22 articles have been tentatively agreed to and exchanges have been made

for 14 other articles. Open issues have been narrowed down to economic items such as wages and health care. Other points of contention involve the company's inability to comply with provisions of the collective bargaining agreement and personal hardships imposed on members due to insufficient staffing. It is apparent that the company is running the operation with too few people, causing a multitude of problems (CBA violations) with overtime, TDY, and entitlements. The company often refuses to comply with the collective bargaining agreement and grievance awards rather than providing adequate staffing.

Local 2727 and UPS jointly filed for mediation services from the National Mediation Board on November 1, 2014. Bargaining sessions with the mediator began February 24, 2015.

## TAMC ONLINE

Check out previous issues of the *Teamster Aviation Professional* at [www.teamsterair.org/tamc/newsletter](http://www.teamsterair.org/tamc/newsletter).

To receive the newsletter via email, sign up at <http://ibt.io/tamc-nl>.

