



PILOT ASSISTANCE BULLETIN

2020-01

Dear Members,

We are obviously living through some very trying times. COVID-19 is wreaking health-related and economic havoc everywhere and is the kind of event which produces chaos and stress in our work and personal lives. Regardless of the size and financial strength of our respective companies, we know that the overall economy is presently in peril and we have justifiable concerns about the future.

Those of us who have been in the industry for a while have been through tough times before—bankruptcies, consolidations, vicious economic cycles, 9/11, and yes, pandemics—all of these events and more are part of the pilot profession's history. So, we know that this too shall pass, and it's always darkest just before the dawn, to cite just two commonly used optimisms. But pilots who have come into this industry after the 2007-2008 recession may not have this experience or frame of reference and they may be more likely to feel the stresses of this situation than some of us older hands. What we are hearing anecdotally from our Professional Standards representatives bears this out; stress is beginning to take an increasing toll on the flight deck with a greater frequency of pilot-to-pilot conflicts.

But there are positive things that we can all do to create a good work environment on the flight deck. One is to be empathetic with your other crewmember(s) and understand that he or she may be facing a major life disruption for the very first time. Whether we realize it not, every person we encounter is likely harboring fears, not only of illness, but also financial uncertainty and how they will survive. Another proactive mitigation against pilot-to-pilot conflict is staying totally focused on our roles on the flight deck. We all need to strive to be consummate professionals, regardless of what is going on around us, and refrain from unintentionally creating inter-personal conflicts by our words or actions while operating the aircraft.

ALPA has experienced hundreds of disruptions to its members' lives since its founding in 1931. And because of that history, the Association has created many tools to help us cope with the uncertainty and stresses of life and work. Your colleagues in Pilot Assistance, Safety, Security, Jumpseat, Retirement and Insurance, Furlough, Legislative, Communications, literally all groups and committees within ALPA at the local and national levels, are working around the clock on our behalf, and keeping us informed and updated on what they are doing.

Remember that each of us is in command of our own attitude and effort. Our professionalism is under a microscope right now and it is a great opportunity to show the world what we are all about. Every passenger, flight attendant, mechanic, agent, and ramp line worker is looking to us for leadership and we need to give it to them.

COVID-19 is not going to last forever. It will run its course and we will recover both mentally, physically and financially. Our industry will return to profitability and life will go on. Let's stay the course, stay strong, stay professional and work together like the professionals that we all are.

Respectfully and in unity,

Capt. Tom Letson
Professional Standards Group Chair
Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l