



## AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INTERNATIONAL

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March 24, 2010

Docket Management Facility  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140  
Washington, DC 20590

**Subject: Comment on Docket No. FAA-2009-0966 and FAA-2009-1217**

To Whom It May Concern:

The Air Line Pilots Association, International, (ALPA) on behalf of our almost 53,000 members at 38 airlines in the United States and Canada, would like to comment on two petitions for exemption submitted by FedEx Express and the Air Line Pilots Association. The exemptions ask for relief from 14 CFR 121.333(c)(3) which requires that if for any reason at any time it is necessary for one pilot to leave his station at the controls of the airplane when operating at flight altitudes above flight level 250, the remaining pilot at the controls shall put on and use his oxygen mask until the other pilot has returned to his duty station. An exemption would allow one pilot to leave his or her station at the controls of the airplane when operating at flight altitudes above flight level 250 while the remaining pilot at the controls shall remove his or her oxygen mask from the stowage unit and have it in his or her lap until the other pilot has returned to his or her duty station.

ALPA strongly supports this petition. Documentation was submitted with the petition and is in the docket outlining the need for this petition. The major factor is the inability to adequately clean oxygen masks on the flight deck; they are breeding grounds for germs that could lead to serious and life-threatening disease among flight crewmembers. Documentation was also submitted that dealt with aircraft reliability and lack of events of rapid decompression with adverse outcomes.

Crews receive frequent training in simulators when they have to practice quick donning of their oxygen masks. As published in FAA literature, the average time of useful consciousness being 16-17 seconds at flight level 410 provides adequate response time to initiate a descent prior to the cabin altitude reaching ambient altitude in the event of a rapid decompression. The Federal Aviation Regulations pertaining to pilot use of oxygen masks were written when jet transport aircraft were a relatively new technology. These regulations are in desperate need of updating to account for the significant evolution of technology as well as enhanced pilot training and education.

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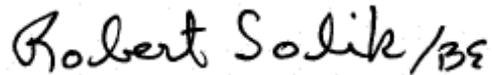
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The quick-don oxygen mask is designed to be put on in the most expeditious manner possible. The requirement for the crewmember remaining at the controls to have the oxygen mask in their lap will further reduce the donning time. The human response time for donning a mask from the lap position should not be a factor.

It is our reasoned opinion that granting this petition will not adversely affect safety of flight and will provide an equivalent or even higher level of safety. In addition, since the oxygen mask cannot be properly cleaned and is a breeding ground for disease, this petition will provide a health benefit for flight crewmembers.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this petition for exemption.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Robert Solik in black ink, including the initials 'BS' at the end.

Captain Robert Solik, Chairman  
National Aeromedical Committee