

Secondary Barriers

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. Congress mandated that air carriers replace standard cockpit doors with hardened doors on nearly all passenger airliners. Industry response to that mandate has resulted in installation of a fortified flight deck door on most commercial aircraft types used today. Unfortunately, some all-cargo aircraft were exempted from this requirement and remain at risk.

The benefit of the reinforced cockpit door is realized when it remains secured during flight. In actual air carrier operations, however, the fortified door must often be opened for a variety of reasons, including crewmember coordination and meal service, as well as the flight crew's physiological requirements. During these times of "door transition," the flight deck is potentially at risk. A "secondary barrier" placed on the cabin side of the fortified flight deck door is designed to enhance security whenever the reinforced flight deck door is opened in flight. It provides additional time for crewmembers to secure the flight deck door in the event of an attempted breach, and also helps to establish an attacker's intent to do harm.

ALPA's white paper: [*Secondary Flight Deck Barriers and Flight Deck Access Procedures – a Call for Action*](#), articulates the Association's support for secondary barriers and accompanying crewmember procedures. In addition to complementing the protection afforded by the reinforced door, an adaptation of the installed secondary barrier may provide a suitable security alternative on those cargo aircraft that have not been equipped with a reinforced cockpit door.

In late 2008, in response to ALPA's urging, the FAA requested that RTCA create a Special Committee (SC) to develop design standards for aircraft secondary barriers. Since that time, SC-221 has actively pursued the definition of those minimal, operational performance standards (MOPS). ALPA also continues to urge Congress to require that the FAA, in consultation with appropriate airline, aircraft manufacturers, and airline labor representatives, identify a physical means, or combination of physical and procedural means, to limit access to the flight decks of all-cargo aircraft to authorized flight crewmembers only.

The Association strongly endorses the establishment of approved design standards for use by all airlines. Today, only one major air carrier has done so on a large portion of its fleet. Others have indicated the desire to follow suit, once appropriate MOPS are established and adopted by FAA.