



## A Pilot's Bill of Rights

It's 3:00 pm on Wednesday afternoon and you just got off the phone with the Chief Pilot's office. They've instructed you to come to headquarters on Friday morning at 10:00 am to discuss an accusation against you. What's next?

While few pilots think they will ever be the subject of an unjust accusation, it can and does happen to good pilots more frequently than we would like to believe.

One of the biggest differences between pilots who don't have union representation and pilots who are represented by ALPA is the type of support and due process rights that are available to you in the event you find yourself in the type of situation described above.

Although every ALPA pilot group contract is different, there are certain basic due process principles that you will find in virtually all ALPA-negotiated contracts. Think of them as a pilot's "Bill of Rights":

- The right to a clear statement or notice regarding what event or action management seeks to investigate;
- The right to a hearing to review the facts regarding any event which may be the basis for discipline or other adverse action and an opportunity to present your side of the story before any action is taken;
- The right to independent union representation at all meetings or hearings;
- The right to appeal any decision by the Chief Pilot's office to punish you or deprive you of a benefit or opportunity to a higher management authority;
- The right to a timely resolution of the dispute;
- The right to have a neutral third party hear and resolve the dispute if the matter cannot be amicably resolved.

## **Pilot's Bill of Rights (cont.)**

The fact is that without union representation and the above “Bill of Rights,” you will have to deal with investigations and potential discipline on your own. And, you won't have access to independent representation or the benefit of a decision by a neutral party—if it comes to that. Sure, family members and some of your pilot colleagues will be in your corner and offer friendly advice and support, but in the end, you will have to handle the situation with management by yourself.

With ALPA representation, you and your union representatives will work together to deal with investigations and threats of discipline. One of the most important purposes of the grievance and arbitration process in a collective bargaining agreement is that it provides an avenue and structure for the union to leverage the unity of the whole pilot group on behalf of one individual—a pretty important benefit!

Of course, because you are a good pilot with a solid work ethic, you may never be falsely accused or make a good faith mistake that management blows completely out of proportion. But, don't assume this will be so. It is basic common sense to protect your career and family by making sure that you have access to professional representation in the event your job and reputation are put at risk. That is only one of the many services that ALPA provides.

We fully recognize that many pilots will never avail themselves of the grievance and arbitration procedure and the protection it provides. But it's wise to make sure that, in the unlikely event that you are called into the Chief Pilot's office to “discuss” an action, decision, or judgment you have made as a professional pilot, you can access the best possible due process protections available—the protections that can only come through union representation and a union contract.

All pilots invest years of their lives and thousands of dollars to pursue a career as a professional pilot. Your status as a qualified professional pilot is your major source of economic security and well being. It's one of your most important assets, and it deserves to be protected. More than 60,000 ALPA pilots are protected under the ALPA pilots' bill of rights—it's time for you to have that protection too!