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Atlas Air Worldwide Flight Duty Rules, Crew Rest and Flight Safety

Atlas Air Worldwide Holdings, Inc. and its U.S. airline subsidiaries, Atlas Air, Inc. and Polar Air Cargo Worldwide, Inc. (collectively “Atlas”) are firmly committed to maintaining the highest level of flight safety. This continuing commitment is evidenced by the flight and duty time rules embedded in the recently finalized collective bargaining agreement (“CBA”) between Atlas and its pilots.

These flight and duty time rules and Atlas’ related fatigue mitigation practices accommodate the Atlas operational model of long all-cargo flights, often crossing multiple time zones, between widely dispersed geographical locations. Providing substantial crew rest and assigning extra crew members to flights are but two examples. Ninety-two percent (92%) of Atlas flights are operated with such “augmented” crews.

Additionally, Atlas pilots receive world-class training at our corporate training facility and have appropriate rest periods built into their schedules to enable them to be fit for duty when they report. In fact, for long duty days, Atlas pilots are provided a rest period equal to or longer than that required by the new FAA rule. Through our gateway travel program, we pay for our pilots’ commercial airline travel and overnight hotel stays at their departure base. On our own initiative, we have equipped all of our aircraft with private rest facilities, allowing one crew to rest while the other crew flies the plane.

Taken together, these factors show that the Federal Aviation Administration made the right decision in treating cargo operations separately from passenger operations in its recently finalized flight and duty time rule. The complex matrix of restrictions in the new rule was based on a domestic passenger airline operating model that is very different from the international all-cargo model. Atlas fully supports one standard of safety, but not a single set of prescriptive rules.
