

NACA

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FAA Meeting on Summer Flight Operations

Prior to the Independence Day travel period, FAA Acting Administrator Billy Nolen convened a meeting with NACA President and CEO George Novak and airline industry executives to ensure safe and efficient operations during the remainder of the summer travel season. FAA is increasing controller staffing levels at Jacksonville Air Route Traffic Control Center and is discussing more frequent use of military airspace in Florida with DOD officials. Responding to recent criticism of the U.S. airline industry, Novak noted that the reasons for disruptions to operations were complicated, including government and industry personnel shortages, and urged DOT and FAA to work more collaboratively with industry going forward.

Mandatory Pilot Retirement Age Legislation; Use of E-3 Visas

Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Representative Chip Roy (R-Texas) are planning to introduce legislation the week of July 25 raising the mandatory retirement age for commercial airline pilots from 65-years-old to 67. We expect Congress to consider the bill next year as part of the FAA reauthorization process. Separately, in response to a recent letter by the Air Line Pilots Association accusing a NACA member airline of misusing the E-3 visa process, NACA wrote Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas on the importance of the “specialty occupation” designation under the program to recruit Australian pilots to offset the shortage of qualified American pilots.

Policy Discussion with Senator Sinema

NACA met with Senate Aviation Subcommittee Chair Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.), to discuss our policy priorities on July 13. Chair Sinema acknowledged her openness to mitigating the commercial pilot shortage as part of the 2023 FAA reauthorization bill. She also understands the importance of avoiding new taxes and regulations to facilitating our industry’s post-pandemic recovery.

FAA Administrator Nomination Update

The White House nominated Denver International Airport President and CEO Phil Washington to be the next FAA Administrator. The Senate Commerce Committee is tentatively planning for a confirmation hearing in September, with a final confirmation vote expected before the November elections. Until that time, Billy Nolen will remain Acting Administrator.

TSA Cyber Program Changes

The Transportation Security Agency is preparing multiple briefings for the aviation industry on significant cyber security threats. The briefings are a prelude to air carrier security program changes and Information Circulars TSA will present to industry in October, hoping for implementation later this year. The requirements and recommended changes may be based on airline size, which potentially impacts critical infrastructure.

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NACA Security Council Meeting

The next NACA Security Council meeting will take place August 23, in Charleston, S.C., just ahead of the MIS Choice User Conference, running from August 23-25. TSA and Customs and Border Protection will both participate in our meeting in-person as well as virtually.

TSA Issues RAMP Proposal

At the end of June, TSA issued its proposal for changes to the ID Media requirements for air carriers. One long-expected change would create a RAMP badge for flight mechanics – load masters would retain CREW badges. NACA will support this change as long as airports are required to recognize the RAMP badge as expected.

ASAC “Just Culture” Recommendation

The Aviation Security Advisory Committee is expected formally vote on an initial recommendation to the Administrator for implementing a “Just Culture” philosophy in September. The recommendation urges the TSA Administrator to support this philosophical change in aviation security, along with the next phase of discovery, planning and implementation of a Just Culture Security Program similar to the FAA program.

FAA Technical Matters

The *Maintenance Council* will meet at NACA HQ on August 2, 2022. FAA staff will cover issues such as the 5G new AD requirements, Required Inspection Items (RII) and other topics submitted by NACA member maintenance personnel. The *Operations Council* will meet at NACA HQ on August 3, 2022. FAA staff will address 5G, Pilot Record Data (PRD) concerns, and other items. On August 4, 2022, NACA will host the *ASIAS Executive Board* (AEB) meeting, followed by the *Commercial Aviation Safety Team* Executive Committee and general meetings.

The next *Infoshare* is scheduled for November 1 – 3 in Seattle. Infoshare has just added “Cargo” to existing Infoshare domains that include all airline technical areas. NACA was nominated and accepted the role of Cargo industry co-chair. Co-chairs from industry and government solicit, review and approve all of the presentations and discussions on the agenda for the Cargo session at Infoshare. ALPA supported NACA’s nomination as the industry co-chair.