

## Command Training

### INTRODUCTION

IFALPA has identified that there is a need across the industry to standardize and enhance command training. In the airline context, the Captain has final authority and final responsibility for the operation and safety of the flight; this requires specific training in the roles and responsibilities as well as enhanced knowledge, skills, and competencies associated with command.

It is IFALPA's opinion that the process to become a commander begins with initial screening of pilot candidates and command should be developed continuously throughout a pilot's career.

### BACKGROUND

In the airline industry, there has been considerable focus on the challenges of properly training pilots. However, one aspect of this training that has received relatively little attention is the training and development of pilots toward assuming command.

There is currently no standardized approach to the instruction or the assessment of command within the industry. Operator courses vary widely in content, structure, and duration.

At many airlines, the progress to command is more rapid now than in the past. The result of this is pilots assuming command at an earlier point in their career, with less operational experience and exposure. This earlier transition highlights the need for robust training for all pilots assuming command.

Effective command styles will vary between cultures and may present particular challenges in airlines with a mixture of cultures. Additionally, social changes mean that command styles based on 20<sup>th</sup> century society may not work effectively in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Finally, increased career mobility for pilots and the employment of direct-entry captains by many airlines also highlights the need for standardised command training.

Airlines must regularly review their command training programmes to ensure they remain valid. Current command training practices may need to be revised or adapted.

### POSITION

The objective of command training is to provide pilots with the command and leadership skills necessary to effectively manage all operational elements of a flight as well as an expanded understanding of the responsibilities associated with command.

IFALPA has identified that the topics in this section are essential elements of command training. IFALPA believes that universal command competencies should be defined and standardised methods by which these skills can be best taught and assessed identified wherever possible.

Given that there are many differences in the details of command unique to each airline, it must be remembered there will be variations in the courses, skills, and their application.

### Aptitude Testing

Initial aptitude testing in recruitment should include command and leadership capabilities.

### On-going Development

Beginning at recruitment, continuing development of command skills is paramount. There is a responsibility between the regulator, the airline and the individual pilot to foster a culture of professional development. With regulator oversight, the operator should implement a development scheme and culture to promote and assist in the development of command skills.

### Qualification for Entry to Command Training

Candidates should meet all legal requirements before being able to apply to the course and should have demonstrated the ability to operate effectively as a co-pilot.

We recommend that consideration for entry to the command course is conducted through a standardized process primarily based on seniority. Any rejection must be based on objective and factual reasons as they relate to pilot competencies.

Operators should be encouraged to establish a minimum level of required experience prior to transitioning to a command position.

### Command Course

There must be a formal syllabus for the command training which includes academics, simulator and line training.

All pilots, regardless of duty position and previous experience, should be equally proficient in all required knowledge and skills. These include application of procedures, application of knowledge and flight path management. Special emphasis in command training should be given to the following pilot competencies:

- Communication
- Leadership and teamwork
- Problem Solving & Decision making
- Situational Awareness
- Workload Management

### Training Second in Command in Augmented Crews

Pilots assigned to Second in Command positions who may serve as acting PIC in augmented operations should receive formal command training. In addition, the command training for these pilots should include operational scenarios related specifically to their role as acting PIC in augmented operations. For example, situations where they may be acting as PIC when the Commander is on break.

### Command Course Instructors

Instructors for command training should be selected based on their leadership and command expertise as well as their aptitudes related to instructing, facilitating, and evaluating.

Any instructor providing practical training or assessment must have experience as a commander in airline operations. Ideally, the instructor should be an experienced and currently line qualified commander with the airline.

### Success Criteria

There needs to be established success criteria that is objectively measured for passing the command check.

IFALPA encourages ICAO and regulators to develop and define common command standards for airline operations.

### Continuous Development

Promotion to command is not a one-time gate we pass through. Command skills need to be further developed during the course of the captain's career to keep up with the dynamic environment. Operators should include some elements of command training during every recurrent training event.

Regulators should be encouraged to establish a requirement for recurrent command training on a regular basis.

### CONCLUSION

At present, each individual airline produces its own course for co-pilots upgrading to command and these courses vary widely, with little discussion between airlines on best practice. The airline industry has a need to standardise command training in the light of industrial, social and cultural changes.

In order to do this the industry should:

1. First decide on what is required of a 21<sup>st</sup> century commander and define competencies which are required to meet this requirement;
2. Second, a review of command courses from various airlines would assist in identifying best practice in the industry, and;
3. Third, a generic Command Training Guide should be produced, with guidance on what is required of a commander and how best to train and assess the competencies and skills required. Such a guide would help to produce a standardised commander product throughout the industry, whilst allowing for cultural and operational differences between airlines.