
IFALPA: Global Pilots on AC624 Decision

MONTREAL – for immediate release: The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) deplores the 25 November 2022 decision by the Supreme Court of Canada to allow the release and use of the recordings from the Air Canada accident flight AC624 Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) in a class action trial.

ICAO annex 13 states that the sole objective of an accident investigation is, *"the prevention of accidents and incidents without apportioning blame or liability."* The CVR recordings are only a portion of the evidence collected during an investigation and it is the responsibility of the investigating authority to determine the contributing factors to prevent a future occurrence. Pilots are willing participants in this process knowing that ICAO, and in this case, the Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board Act, recognizes the CVR as an on-board recording that must be treated with discretion and used as intended by trained aviation safety professionals.

ICAO cautions in Annex 13 that the disclosure of these records, *"in criminal, civil, administrative or disciplinary proceedings, or their public disclosure, can have adverse consequences for persons or organizations involved in accidents and incidents, likely causing them or others to be reluctant to cooperate with accident investigation authorities in the future."* Safety is enhanced by open and honest conversation between crew members. When there is a perceived threat of those words being used inappropriately, the conversation is likely to be restricted, to the detriment of flight safety. Not only does the disclosure contravene the internationally understood principles of accident investigation confidentiality, it is also a breach of trust of those involved in the investigation.

IFALPA once again stresses that the sole purpose of a CVR is to aid investigators in determining the factors leading to an accident and not to apportion blame or be used outside of its safety context. Any other use of CVR data is not only invalid but is an unacceptable invasion of privacy best described as an attempt at sensationalism and voyeurism of the worst kind and not in line with ICAO standards and recommended practices.

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Note to Editors:

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations represents more than 100,000 pilots in nearly 100 countries. The mission of IFALPA is to promote the highest level of aviation safety worldwide and to be the global advocate of the piloting profession, providing representation, services, and support to both our members and the aviation industry.

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