



FEDERATION OF INDIAN PILOTS

Ref No: FIP/MOCA/2023 - 01

6th January 2023

To
Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia
Hon'ble Minister of Civil Aviation
Ministry of Civil Aviation,
Rajiv Gandhi Bhavan,
Safdarjung Airport,
New Delhi – 110 003

Sub: Objection to the practice of NOCs/ unreasonable Notice Periods and other unfair/unsafe practices affecting civil pilots in India

Sir,

Our Federation, comprising of more than 6000 professional Indian commercial pilots wishes to bring to your kind notice the various policies introduced by operators, and condoned by the DGCA, that are facilitating an unsafe work environment fuelled by rampant exploitation and unfair labour practices.

Some examples of these are listed below:

1) NOC:

Pilots seeking alternate employment are forced to obtain NOCs from the current employer prior to joining another company. Very often these pilots are seeking relief from the exploitative work conditions from the very same organisations who have to issue the NOC.

This requirement further entraps pilots and results in an atmosphere vitiated by more exploitation, oppression and mental harassment.

2) Requirement of Accident /Incident free records:

Although such records should be easily available from the DGCA, pilots are made to run from pillar to post to obtain the same prior to fresh employment which only violates the fundamental freedom to choose better and timely job opportunities.

3) Unreasonable/one sided notice periods:

Pilots are often coerced to enter into contracts with unreasonable and one sided notice periods for tendering their resignation. In some cases a pilot may have to serve upto six months' notice to the employer whereas the employer may require only a day to terminate a pilot's services. Apart from being grossly unfair and one sided, these conditions put tremendous pressure on pilots due to the resultant job insecurity and scope for harassment.

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4) DGCA's emphasis on phasing out physical copies of certified Pilot Logbooks:

We also object to the DGCA's emphasis on gradually phasing out physical copies of certified pilot logbooks and making pilots rely solely on the EGCA site to access flying records - creating a potential likelihood of the future denial of access of logbook data by the DGCA to certain pilots, under some unjustified pretext or another.

We would like to clarify that we do not oppose the digitization of records, per se, provided there is a guarantee that there will no denial of service or access at any time and that physical copies of certified logbooks will continue to be recognised by the DGCA as an alternate option as these are also required by many foreign organisations /regulators to verify a pilot's flying experience.

Prima facie, all the above practices have/are being introduced to create barriers in the job market for pilots in India, control the free movement of labour, prevent the upward revision of wages impacted by inflation and to create more oppressive work conditions to drive commercial interests at the cost of safety. This is highly dangerous as mentally stressed, exploited and disgruntled pilots cannot be expected to perform their duties without the distinct possibility of grave errors being committed on the job.

While some may argue that many of the above stated issues are contractual matters between the employer and employee and beyond the regulatory scope of the DGCA, it would be appreciated that the DGCA has often intervened in such matters citing the public interest, albeit mostly in favour of employers and not the vulnerable pilots as should often be the case. Issues affecting Air Safety whether directly or indirectly, must be tackled head on by the regulator and curbed without promoting commercial and business interests instead.

Sir, we look up to you as a dynamic, progressive face of the government and an elected representative, to direct the state machinery to use all its powers to free our industry from rampant exploitation and to uphold the democratic rights of industry professionals so that safety is not jeopardised and the larger public interest is upheld.

May we reiterate that as a professional body we are ready to collaborate with your good offices to reinforce our collective goal to make Indian skies safer and more secure for the public.

Thanking you

Yours Faithfully,

Capt. Surinder Mehta
President, FIP