

10PRL07

IFALPA to repeat calls for ICAO to take decisive action to address lithium battery safety at today's meeting of DG panel

Montreal 9 October: The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) will present its proposals for enhancing the safety of the future of lithium battery shipments to today's session of ICAO's Dangerous Goods Panel. IFALPA's proposals call for all cargo shipments of lithium batteries to be fully regulated as dangerous goods and end the current packaging, labelling, training, and pilot notification exceptions provided for in the ICAO Technical Instructions. Additionally, IFALPA proposes that the total quantity of lithium-ion batteries in a single cargo compartment be limited, and that lithium metal batteries be prohibited as cargo on aircraft because they present an unacceptable fire risk.

The need to take swift, decisive action to protect against the dangers of these batteries has been illustrated by a number of serious incidents, including one on August 14 that could have led to the loss of a widebody aircraft had the fire occurred in flight. There have been well over 100 incidents involving battery fires in air transportation since 1991, with the number of incidents increasing each year.

Lithium batteries provide essential power for millions of people every day as they use laptop computers, cell phones, flashlights, and cameras. Because flight crewmembers have the training and procedures necessary to successfully combat a fire involving a single battery in an aircraft cabin, IFALPA is not calling for new restrictions on what passengers are permitted to bring aboard aircraft. IFALPA is extremely concerned, however, about the risk from transporting thousands of these batteries together aboard aircraft as cargo.

The ICAO Dangerous Goods Panel will be voting on these and other lithium battery proposals prior to the conclusion of the meeting on 15 October.

Notes to Editors

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations represents in excess of 100,000 pilots in more than 100 countries world-wide. The mission of IFALPA is to be the global voice of airline pilots, promoting the highest level of aviation safety and security world-wide and providing services, support and representation to all of its Member Associations. See the Federation website www.ifalpa.org

For more information contact Gideon Ewers, IFALPA Media Communications Officer +44 1932 579041 or on gideonewers@ifalpa.org