IFALPA Multi-Crew Pilot Licence (MPL) Checklist for Member Associations

Executive Summary

The International Civil Aviation Organisation's (ICAO) Amendment 167 to Annex 1 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation and supporting Procedures for Air Navigation Services – Training (PANS-TRG) has introduced a new flight crew licence called the Multi-Crew Pilot Licence (MPL), which came into effect on 23 November 2006.

The Multi-Crew Pilot Licence (MPL), if applied correctly, could produce a highly qualified new hire first officer for the airlines. However, applied incorrectly in response to cost or time pressures to respond to the current pilot shortage, it could have a detrimental impact on flight safety. Improper application could also erode current, proven training standards.

A number of MPL training courses have already begun and there are already MPL graduates flying in commercial operations. IFALPA has yet to be convinced that the new MPL scheme will provide sufficient guarantees for safeguarding the highest safety and training quality standards currently in place and urges all Member Associations to be proactive with regard to MPL and robustly monitor MPL implementation in their own states.

IFALPA's Involvement in the MPL

The International Federation of Airline Pilots' Associations has been involved with the Multi Crew Pilot's Licence from an early stage:

IFALPA has actively participated in the ICAO Flight Crew Licensing and Training Panel since the beginning to defend the interests of pilots and to promote the highest level of safety at all times.

IFALPA has issued a Position Statement highlighting our concerns with the implementation of the Multi Crew Pilot Licence and this statement is available on the IFALPA website at http://www.ifalpa.org/

IFALPA has participated in the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines MPL Symposium in Kuala Lumpur (May 07) and the ICAO Regional Symposium on the Implementation of the Multi-Crew Pilot Licence in Hong Kong (August 07) to highlight our concerns with the implementation of MPL.

IFALPA is actively participating in the IATA MPL Task Force established in 2007 to harmonise and standardise MPL implementation worldwide.

IFALPA is actively participating in the Royal Aeronautical Society International Working Group on Simulator Standards to update ICAO Doc 9625 Manual of Criteria for the Qualification of Flight Simulators. This working group will define the level of fidelity required for simulators required for MPL training.

IFALPA is also working with ICAO to develop guidance material for the performance evaluation criteria of the various manoeuvres and the phases of flight for the MPL.

IFALPA will continue to actively participate in all relevant forums to promote the highest level of safety at all times.

IFALPA's Concerns with MPL implementation:

The MPL Concept is not fully understood by Regulators and there is a need to educate Flight Training Organisations, Airlines and other stakeholders.

The MPL philosophy is a new and yet unproven concept and is therefore a significant departure from existing pilot instruction methodologies. Proper analysis of the MPL on a scientific basis is required to prove that the new MPL philosophy is a sound procedure that meets the current level of safety provided by traditional training methods.

The ICAO PANS-TRAINING document is incomplete and needs further guidance on:
The appropriate flight training devices (FTD) required to measure proficiency for aeronautical tasks and cognitive skill sets. This work has been tasked to the Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS) and the results will ultimately be incorporated into PANS TRG as guidance for the construction of an MPL syllabus.

MPL instructor qualifications need to be clearly defined and instructors need to be qualified in multi crew operations in order to teach the MPL effectively in all phases of the training. MPL is intended to graduate a pilot trained in, and familiar with, multi-crew operations. How can the MPL graduate be effectively trained to that basic requirement unless genuine knowledge of a multi-crew environment and operation is imparted?

A clear link between an airline and the Flight Training Organisation needs to be established in order to ensure that the new MPL licence holder is not an adverse safety risk when flying the line. Any feedback is effectively fed back to the FTO in order to correct deficiencies and for any required safety or quality modifications to be made to the MPL programme. The link should ensure that the airlines's SOPs can be trained from the beginning.

Competency requirements need to be clearly defined especially in the area of data collection and feedback to the FTO. Data collection to support competency based training requires sensitive grading scales to be used during training and evaluation.   The integrity of the grading scale requires extraordinary training and calibration of the people collecting the data…the instructors and evaluators in the programme.

The MPL licence allows a reduction in actual flying hours during training. Any reduction in actual flight hours requires a step by step "ETOPS" approach. This approach is outlined in Chapter 3, Appendix 3 of the PANS-TRG document and is entitled "Guidelines for the Implementation of the MPL."

National MPL Advisory boards must be established to monitor the implementation of MPL programmes to ensure that they meet the intent of Annex 1 and the PANS-TRG documents. They must also collect data on individual progress assessments, rating ride reports and recurrent checks and forward this to ICAO when required.

Checklist for Member Associations:

The Multi Crew Pilots Licence (MPL) is now being implemented in a number of different countries around the world and your country could be affected soon. It is vital that Member Associations make themselves aware of any current or proposed MPL initiatives in their state by either contacting your national regulator or Flight Training Organisations. If an MPL programme is running or is proposed in your State:

YOUR MEMBER ASSOCIATION SHOULD:

✈ Establish a small MPL Task Force within your Association that should preferably comprise of pilots with training experience.

✈ Become knowledgeable regarding the MPL by familiarising yourself with the requirements in ICAO Annex 1 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation- Personnel licensing and ICAO Doc 9868 Procedures for Air Navigation Services-Training.

✈ Liaise with your National Regulator to ensure that an MPL Advisory Board is established that as a minimum: Comprises of the Regulator, Flight Training Organisations, Airlines and pilot representatives from your association.

✈ Ensure that the MPL concept is fully understood by all participants.

✈ Ensure the full and proper implementation of the MPL as per the intent of Annex 1 and the PANS- Training documents.

✈ Develops and implements MPL legislation that all MPL programs in your country must follow.

✈ Ensure that the results of each phase of an MPL programme are thoroughly and continuously monitored so that any necessary changes are incorporated into future MPL programmes. This monitoring function should be incorporated within the MPL legislation and also be a defined function of the MPL Advisory Board.

✈ Keep a record and audit trail of all MPL correspondence/ letters/ communications and follow up every point with correspondence, outlining your MA's safety concerns.

✈ Report any deficiencies in airline training programmes to IATA so that this can be included as part of the airline's audit.

Use the media to obtain your objectives, always be constructive and offer a safe alternative.

Lobby your politicians and the regulators and make them accountable for their legislation. Regulators MUST have effective oversight of their MPL programmes.

Liaise with IFALPA's experts on MPL.

AN MPL PROGRAMME MUST:

Establish the need for a clear link between the Airline and the Flight Training Organisation to ensure that there is an effective feedback loop so that MPL training can be modified where necessary.

Ensure that there is a graduated, step by step approach to the transfer of actual aircraft hours to training time in a Flight Training Device. Each step should be validated by actual experience before the next reduction. Essentially, the approach followed during the development and implementation of ETOPS is a good model.

Ensure that there is an open attitude towards the initial results from the various FTO's so that the necessary changes are incorporated into future MPL programmes.

Ensure that a selection process is in place that aims to select candidates who have:
- The intellectual capability to successfully complete the intensive course of instruction and evaluation;
- Sufficient manual and cognitive skills to safely handle the aircraft and execute proper flight management;
- Personality traits suitable for duties as an airline pilot;
- The right attitude and social skills for team work;
- The motivation to develop and maintain a high level of airmanship;
- Leadership and command potential

The MPL is still evolving and your Member Association's input is vital to its success. Other Member Associations are already actively involved with MPL implementation in their own regions and can offer valuable advice where necessary!

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