

*AVIATION FATIGUE MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM:
PARTNERSHIPS FOR SOLUTIONS*

II. INTRODUCTION

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has recognized the need for leadership to begin dialogs to understand and address fatigue in the aviation industry. The issues are cross-cutting affecting flight crews, ground support personnel, maintenance personnel, and air traffic controllers. The solutions require the cooperative action of industry, employee groups, and the FAA. Making head way also requires a shared commitment to solve problems. That shared commitment must rest on a common understanding of the problem, a frank understanding of the barriers, and a collaborative approach to developing practical solutions.

The FAA set four primary objectives of the *Aviation Fatigue Symposium: Partnerships for Solutions*:

1. Energize the aviation community to solve aviation fatigue problems.
2. Provide attendees with the most current information on fatigue physiology, risk assessment and mitigation alternatives.
3. Develop a common understanding of fatigue issues, identify challenges that create the potential for fatigue, and discuss barriers that have historically prevented solutions to reduce fatigue.
4. Discuss the potential for collaborative alliances to develop and implement fatigue mitigation strategies.

The symposium was scheduled for June 17 to 19, 2008, at the Sheraton Premiere Hotel in Tyson's Corners, Virginia. The event was designed to accommodate from 250 to 300 attendees over a 2 ½ day period. Supporting the FAA in conducting the meeting was the Institutes for Behavior Resources, Inc. for

development of content and speakers and CMP Meeting Services for meeting planning, logistics, and attendee support.

The audience of the meeting was broadly defined to include government agencies concerned with transportation fatigue (FAA, National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Defense (DOD), and others), commercial air carriers, major employee groups representing flight and ground support personnel, aircraft manufacturers, aviation associations, and the Flight Safety Foundation. The content of the meeting and the speakers were selected to address fatigue issues and concepts of interest to this diverse group of attendees.

The format for the meeting was designed to disseminate essential information about aviation fatigue, from the underlying biology to the operational impacts, and to stimulate discussion leading to seeds for future collaborative solutions. The meeting began with a morning of keynote speakers defining the fatigue issues and illustrating the importance of finding workable solutions. Following the keynotes were more technical descriptions of the fundamental biology of fatigue and how the conditions of aviation schedules could create performance deficits that can be operationally significant. Following this foundation material were parallel sessions with panel speakers addressing topics of particular interest to flight operations (track one) and ground support shift work operations (track two). Specific topics covered by the panel discussions were operational drivers of fatigue, description of fatigue risk management systems, operational evidence of fatigue, current state of fatigue mitigation for flight and shift work operations, and measures of

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effectiveness of fatigue risk management systems. Following the parallel sessions were breakout discussion groups that focused on specific areas of interest for either flight or shift work operations. These discussion groups had specific assignments to discuss fatigue challenges and drivers, historical barriers to reductions in fatigue, and potential avenues for future fatigue mitigation. Finally, on the third day, the discussion groups reported a summary of their discussions for the assembled audience, punctuated by a commentary on these reports by a panel of operational fatigue experts (see Appendix A for detailed agenda).

In order to encourage open discussion, the meeting was closed to the public and attendance was by invitation only. Every effort was made to extend invitations to major stakeholder groups. Letters of invitation were sent to the vice presidents of operations of the air carriers with an invitation to send key members of their organization concerned with safety and crew scheduling. Letters of invitation were also sent to employee representation organizations. Invitations were also sent to major aviation related associations. Finally, international fatigue experts were invited to attend and many were asked to serve as facilitators and subject matter experts in support of the discussion groups. Discussion

group leaders were selected to ensure a balance of both management and labor representatives, as well as fatigue experts.

In preparation for the meeting, conference calls and mailings to the panel members and discussion group leaders were used to prepare topics and content of presentations and to facilitate smooth and fair conduct of the discussion groups. A discussion group guide was prepared to ensure that the groups covered an essential set of topics, conducted the discussions in a fair and balanced manner, and prepared reports that were clear and comprehensive relative to the goals of the meeting. Each discussion group was also assigned a note taker to assure that the substance of the discussions were captured and reflected in the report of the groups. Transcripts of the first and last day were maintained by the conference support contractor to assist with preparation of the meeting proceedings. The proceedings consist of summaries of all the talks, major discussion points of each talk, the resume of each speaker, and summaries of each panel. The proceedings also include all publicly releasable research findings and summaries of the discussion group findings.