

E. PARALLEL SESSION

CURRENT STATE OF MITIGATION: FLIGHT OPERATIONS



June 18, 2008
8:30 – 10:00

Panel Overview

The “*Current State of Mitigation: Flight Operations*” session was chaired by Mr. Robert Talcott Francis II, Flight Safety Foundation, and included presentations by representatives from an international carrier, a domestic carrier and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Captain Simon Stewart, and Dr. Alexandra Holmes, both representing easyJet Airline, Ltd., provided an overview of easyJet’s Fatigue Risk Management System (FRMS) and how it was incorporated into their Safety Management System (SMS). Dr. Jack Rubino, of United Airlines Flight Center, summarized the fatigue mitigation initiatives in effect at United Airlines and their steps to develop a comprehensive FRMS. The panel closed with a review of the history and current regulations regarding flight, duty and rest requirements provided by Mr. Gregory Kirkland, of the Air Transportation division of the FAA. The goal of the panel was to provide the audience with the latest developments in fatigue management in flight operations by presenting examples of fatigue risk management initiatives in both domestic and international operations. This panel also allowed an opportunity for the symposium attendees to hear a regulatory perspective of fatigue risk management approaches in operations.

As heard during the panel, both domestic and international air carriers are taking a proactive approach to enhance safety by implementing multiple initiatives that aim to manage fatigue

during flight operations. These range from research programs involving sleep, fatigue and fatigue-related performance in pilots to comprehensive fatigue management programs. It has been demonstrated that effective components include comprehensive fatigue educational modules, software modeling tools to manage flight schedules, non-punitive processes for crew to report fatigue, scientific protocols for exploring key fatigue risks, processes for investigating the role fatigue played in incidents, and an accountable fatigue safety action group or committee that meets regularly. As heard by easyJet, a comprehensive FRMS approach that applies control and safety resources in a risk-based manner is seen as an essential component of a business model and long-term success of the company.

Fatigue management initiatives can help crew members to obtain adequate rest allowing their continued support of safe operations. However, the challenge remains with rulemaking in finding the right balance of safety, science, cost and operational efficiency. As stressed by the panel, it is important that regulations be reasonably balanced to assure that the adverse effects of fatigue do not jeopardize a flight and, at the same time, be cost effective and flexible enough for operational efficiency. The two examples presented during the session clearly demonstrated the feasibility of implementing fatigue mitigation strategies in current operations, under current regulations.