

Background Checks for Pilots

In view of the concerns expressed by a number of IFALPA's Member Associations concerning the arbitrary and sometimes unclear methods used by some National Authorities to both perform background checks on pilots and decide on the granting of their security clearance for unescorted access to a Security Restricted Area, the Federation would like to clarify its position on the subject.

IFALPA fully endorses the provisions of ICAO Doc. 8973, Chapter 11, concerning background checks, and also stresses the following points:

1. Background checks should not be conducted without the written consent of the pilot concerned.
2. Background checks should be valid for a period not exceeding five years in order to ensure that the pilot continues to meet the required criteria.
3. Background checks criteria should be clearly established by the National Authority after consultation with the relevant aviation stakeholders including the local Pilots Association, and should be available at any time for consultation by these stakeholders.
4. Such criteria should address concerns that may arise in specific circumstances, for example when the pilot is coming back to their country after a number of years flying abroad, or when unexplained "gaps" exist in a pilot's work history.
5. If a background check reveals disqualifying circumstances, there should be a transparent evaluation to consider whether such circumstances may be disregarded. The pilot should be actively involved in this evaluation, and a document should be issued confirming that such an evaluation has taken place.
6. Any negative decision should only be based on the trustworthiness of the applicant with respect to aviation security.
7. There should be a clear legal framework for the right to appeal a negative decision.