

Background Checks for Pilots

NOTE

This paper supersedes 16POS13, of the same name.

In view of concerns expressed by several IFALPA Member Associations regarding the arbitrary and, at times, unclear approaches adopted by certain National Authorities in conducting pilot background checks and determining eligibility for security clearance for unescorted access to Security Restricted Areas (SRAs), the Federation wishes to clarify its position on the subject.

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

1. Background checks should not be conducted without the written consent of the pilot concerned.
2. Background check criteria should be clearly established by the National Authority after consultation with the relevant aviation stakeholders, including Pilots Associations, and should be available at any time for consultation by these stakeholders.
3. Such criteria should address concerns that may arise in specific circumstances, for example, when the pilot returns to their home country after several years of flying abroad, or when unexplained gaps exist in a pilot's employment history.
4. States should, upon a pilot's request, immediately provide the pilot with their police or criminal history report, without notifying their airline or requiring prior authorization from the airline or the aviation authority.
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 be based only 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.