

FAA Must Swiftly Implement Overdue Ramp Worker Safety Actions Required by Reauthorization Law

Following years of advocating for a pro-worker FAA bill, transportation labor praised the passage of the bipartisan FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024, which aimed to enhance safety standards for aviation workers and the traveling public. A year after its enactment, significant work remains to be done to implement all the provisions. Specifically, Section 353 mandates that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) initiate a safety review for ramp workers 180 days (by November 2024) after enactment. The review would identify and address current gaps and daily risks faced by ramp workers whose work plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety and efficiency of commercial air travel. This work is often invisible to the public and is done in secure areas of the airport, out of view from travelers.

Tragically, in the last few years, there have been injuries and fatalities among ramp workers directly attributable to inadequate training and faulty equipment. Every day, airport ramp workers encounter serious hazards, including jet blasts, engine ingestion, tire explosions, and various vehicular accidents, often with limited protective measures in place. Ramp workers' jobs are physically and mentally demanding, and their risks are exacerbated without proper training. Their jobs require constant focus and spatial awareness in narrow corridors shared with aircraft, ground equipment, and physical infrastructure. Additionally, short aircraft turnaround times require these workers to move quickly in loud environments that limit verbal communication. Safely navigating this constantly changing work area, routinely subjected to extreme temperatures, is an inherently difficult job that can be dangerous. Alarming, there is no federal ramp safety standard to protect these workers.

The FAA Reauthorization Act requires a review of current safety procedures with the goal of developing focused training to address critical safety deficiencies and prevent future accidents and incidents. The review ensures that the workforce is well-informed and capable of responding to potential hazards on the job. The law also mandated a report to Congress on the results of the review and any recommendations for Congressional action.

Transportation labor urges the FAA to produce a comprehensive report – informed by workers' experiences – to provide strong recommendations that balance safety and efficiency, thereby protecting airport ramp workers on the job. In May 2025, the FAA conducted a safety forum where labor and industry representatives discussed issues in the ramp worker environment and various safety concerns. Labor appreciated the opportunity to participate in the forum and further stressed the importance of continuing to have a seat at the table when formulating future ramp worker safety policies. Labor also urges the FAA to convene additional follow-up stakeholder meetings – especially with ramp workers and their representatives – and continue to review best practices prior to issuing a thorough, actionable report to Congress.

Over the past year, aviation safety has received increased scrutiny and attention. What remains clear is that unionized aviation workers have consistently prioritized aviation safety and worker

safety, upholding the highest safety standards in global aviation through their commitment and expertise. **The FAA must commit to swiftly and deliberately finalizing the ramp worker safety review to ensure a safer work environment. It is time for the FAA to swiftly implement policies to keep these very preventable accidents from occurring.**

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