



May 14, 2024

**To: REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS
BRANCHES & FACILITIES**

UPDATE

Regional Training Seminars:

Recently, we concluded the last of our regional training seminars. The seminars have been really well-received and definitely worthwhile. Although there were some very tough questions along the way, that's good. There is no place for artificial harmony in CATCA, and it's imperative that people speak up and be heard. I can confidently assure the membership that your regional union reps made sure the national executive listened to your concerns and questions throughout our meetings over the last months. Thanks to all who took the time to participate. Following last year's national training seminar and this year's regional format, we plan to continue our commitment to providing more and better training by organizing something national again early next year.

Staffing and Training:

Short staffing continues to present the biggest challenge for our workplace and impacts us negatively in numerous ways. Despite the increased focus Nav has placed on recruitment and training, it is obvious that we will continue to suffer for some time. March looked much better than January and February, with 27 new entrants into basic training, compared to 17 lost to retirement, resignation, and CTs. Still, that's not nearly enough to fill in much of the hole we find ourselves in, and that means those left behind will have to continue to make up the work for the shortage or leave it undone. The plan for third-party training seems to be progressing, and for those who haven't yet heard, CAE of Montreal will be conducting that work with courses scheduled to begin in October. CATCA will be watching closely to ensure that the terms of our agreement are respected as the project evolves and to help ensure that the project is a success.

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We obviously need bodies. At this point, it is unclear what impact the recent management changes might have on this initiative, but CATCA leadership has already met with VP HR, Diana Kelly, to ensure NAV recognizes how sensitive this is to us and to ensure the lines of communication remain open. The massive amount of pressure being placed on all our members involved in training is not lost on us as a union, and the entire membership is grateful for the work you all do.

Classification:

The CATCA/Nav committee struck to address issues related to our classification system, has been meeting regularly. Our CATCA representatives have been pushing hard for progress, but it's been frustratingly slow. We appreciate that this whole undertaking is fraught, but we are also committed to addressing longstanding inequities in our system and making gains for our members where we can. We'll keep pushing for that and appreciate your patience. There are more scheduled meetings for this week, and we will keep members posted on developments. Please keep in mind that this is a separate undertaking from the regular classification working group and from the review process that Nav undertakes independently.

Fam Flights:

After CATCA filed a policy grievance on Nav's decision to cap fam flight approvals to CFS in Las Vegas, subsequent negotiations have resulted in a reversal of that decision. Approvals will still be subject to operational requirements.

To this point, the Company has still failed to agree to the addition of any new conferences, and consequently, the only long-range destination that is available is Paris (Reims). For those wishing to get their Fam Flights in before the end of this period, we recommend you apply now to the limited selection of destinations available.

Fatigue:

Members have probably noticed the focus that fatigue in ATC has been getting south of the border. It seems the FAA is repeating mistakes made elsewhere by enacting policies first and planning to consult with those affected later. Although NATCA has been successful in pushing back on the timelines that were communicated for now, the mindset that a longstanding, systemic problem can be resolved by a few meetings and the stroke of a pen by 'experts' is troubling. Politically expedient maybe, but that approach has revealed itself to be highly

impractical here, and we're living the proof of that. The latest steps Nav has undertaken in their fatigue program have not had a positive impact on members, the operation, or even the desired target – fatigue. Fortunately, the CAP that Nav had to submit to TC has now been closed, and that means Nav has some more latitude to make changes if those changes can be justified by data. We are hoping for some changes very soon. CATCA reps met with Nav management last week to discuss amending and evolving the current program and limits based on what we have learned. Both the consultation and the openness to practical change are very welcome developments for us. We made clear that imposing limits without the expectation of adhering to them makes no sense to us and puts controllers in a very difficult position. If there are limits, they should be negotiated, and they should be adhered to by both parties. If compliance with the limits doesn't work – the limits need to be adapted to something that can. We're hopeful that may be happening soon. We will continue to engage with FSAG, Nav, TC, and the TSB directly on the issue to press for common-sense changes to the program that will alleviate some of the principal pain points we're experiencing and still advance the overall concept. Continuing consultation through a new subcommittee will also be pursued by us as a supplement to the established FSAG process. That should help.

However things unfold, TC has indicated that regulation on fatigue will be coming within the next few years, and all controllers would do well to keep that in mind. We absolutely must participate in the process to make sure that any legislation reflects our interests and actually advances safety in the ANSP. The recently concluded fatigue survey will hopefully provide some data that can be used to validate our concerns, justify amendments, and provide more precise clarity on how members feel.

Summer:

As summer approaches, the enormity of the challenge created by the short staffing situation is becoming more apparent. Employee rights and working conditions are in direct conflict with the goal of reliable and predictable service delivery by ATC. Historically, our membership has consistently demonstrated an ability and willingness to go above and beyond normal expectations to ensure things keep running safely. However, there are limits, and we are clearly in a place now where we are potentially introducing real risk into the system and to ourselves by being pushed to do more with less. We cannot allow the normalization of this situation. As a union, we are ensuring that NAV, Transport Canada, the Ministry of Labour, and the TSB are being kept up to date on our concerns. As members, you must ensure you responsibly exercise your licenses – that is your legal obligation.

We must also insist that NAV takes all steps to ensure that employees, as well as, the operation are supported, and safety is maintained and prioritized. Time in position, meaningful breaks, and workload management all become vital considerations when we are regularly working in short-staffed situations. The expectation to maintain an unimpacted level of service delivery

may become an unrealistic expectation. If controllers are finding themselves being placed into any unrealistic situations in these regards, please raise the concern to your union representative. CATCA has committed to filing Securitas reports for cases where controllers are being forced to sit for extended periods without a meaningful break, directed to work beyond 12 hours, or where traffic control measures are not respected, so please bring these situations to our attention: they pose a risk. Please do not interpret this as a call to be intentionally problematic. It is not. However, we must continually work proactively to ensure that a balance between service delivery and worker protection is maintained, and safety ensured.

In closing this update, I'd like to congratulate one of our members from Whitehorse Tower on his upcoming 50th anniversary as an air traffic controller. Congratulations Garry Doering on 50 years! Air Traffic Control is a very elite club, and to be an active member of that club for 50 years is an incredible accomplishment. Think about it – if this company did proper succession planning, his replacement would be eligible for retirement by now!

In solidarity,

Nick von Schoenberg
President

Scott Loder
Executive Vice President