

Podcast Transcription

Fly by Night: First Officer Kandy Bernskoetter – Casualty Assistant Liaison CAL

Captain Chris Lee My guest today is First Officer Kandy Bernskoetter. She's here to talk to us today about the Casualty Assistant Liaison (CAL) and how to help you and your family in case something doesn't go right. Welcome back, Kandy.

First Officer Kandy Bernskoetter Thanks.

Captain Chris Lee Tell me about the Casualty Assistant Liaison program.

First Officer Kandy Bernskoetter Flight crew management established a program where a pilot can choose someone to act as a liaison between their family and FedEx in case of a major personal or family event.

Captain Chris Lee Why is it important for pilots to assign a Casualty Assistant Liaison?

First Officer Kandy Bernskoetter Well, the pilots involved in a major event, think about who you would want to be by your family's side. Who would be the person you'd want to contact your family or go be with your family during that time and help you with the next steps. Or something happened to a loved one at home while the pilots at work, who would you want to contact you on the road?

Captain Chris Lee What makes someone a good pick?

First Officer Kandy Bernskoetter Well, a CAL or Casual Assistant Liaison should be someone your family knows and maybe knows a little about your life. Perhaps your support system or your church or your neighbors. The CAL doesn't have to be a FedEx crew member, though a crew member may be able to explain and understand our policies a little better than someone who's not a pilot. But you might consider choosing a non-crew member for your secondary CAL someone that lives in your home town, someone that's most likely to be there as opposed to a pilot who's flying on trips. Once you pick a CAL, ensure your family and loved ones know who you choose. In addition, ensure the CAL that you pick knows that you've chosen them and that they're willing to help you and your family in the event of a situation.

Captain Chris Lee Does my CAL need to understand my insurance and all my different benefits?

First Officer Kandy Bernskoetter No, not at all. As a matter of fact, we have people that are experts in that area. Both our R&I and Bereavement committees at ALPA and our pilot benefits admin department at FedEx at the Company side are going to help your family with those questions. You just need to pick somebody who knows you and your family and is compassionate would make a good communications liaison. I don't recommend you pick your spouse. This is the person you're picking to help your spouse or your family.

Captain Chris Lee How does a pilot go and sign up?

First Officer Kandy Bernskoetter It's actually pretty easy. You go to VIPs and to the site map and scroll down to contact information and click on Casualty Assistant Liaison. There'll be a form where you can fill in the name and contact information for your CAL pick. Again, you can pick a pilot or a non-pilot. So, there's a primary spot and a secondary spot.

Now, this information can only be viewed by you and flight management. ALPA doesn't have access. Crew scheduling doesn't have access.

Captain Chris Lee I notice under contact information, there's also emergency contact information. What is that and how is that different from CAL?

First Officer Kandy Bernskoetter Well, it's extremely important in an effort to mitigate delays in contacting your family in the event of an emergency with a pilot on the road that you put other contact information in the computer. So maybe your spouse's work number, your family support system. For me, I have my husband's cell number. I have my nextdoor neighbor in case there's like a natural disaster. And I also have a close family friend and my sister. So, consider that, the easy ways for the Company to find your family if something happens to you while you're at work.

Captain Chris Lee And to update your emergency or add your emergency contact information, how does a pilot do that?

First Officer Kandy Bernskoetter Well, it's in the same place as the CAL. It's under contract information in the VIPs site map and just click on emergency contact information and just fill in the blanks of the name and phone number of the person. Remember, this is just for flight management and you to view. This is not viewed by crew scheduling. But you know, since we don't do junior meaning or VJA or what that's known as at other airlines, if crew scheduling gets you on the phone, you have to fly trips. We don't have that here at FedEx. So, there's really no reason to hide these phone numbers from our flight managers. They're just here to help you and your family.

Captain Chris Lee Well, if something happens and a family member needs to contact a pilot, how does that work?

First Officer Kandy Bernskoetter Well, if the pilot's on a trip and they're not answering their phone and the family is not sure where they are, they can definitely call the Company to find out information. I recommend they call the crew resource scheduling phone number because there's so many people on that phone tree and there's always someone that answers. A duty officer could be a good backup number, but if there's a big major event, the duty officer won't be able to handle a lot of families calling into FedEx. So, the family can call 901-224-5100 and you can get the duty officer from that phone tree. But you can also get crew resource scheduling. The thing is, when they do call, they're going to have to know the pilot's help code. That's the code you put in the computer so that person can verify their identity and then the Company can give information about the pilot's location or situation. If you're not sure if you have one or you want to update it, go to that VIPs site map again and this is located under personal information and click on update help code. I recommend you pick a word your family will remember under stress, but not a really easy word that a stranger or someone that knows you that may not have your best interests at heart could figure out.

Captain Chris Lee Have there been any lessons learned with these programs?

First Officer Kandy Bernskoetter Yeah, unfortunately, there have been. One is if you don't have a CAL listed, we really have a hard time contacting your family on the ALPA side. We don't cold call your family knowing about what's going on. We really need a third party so we can check on you and see what's going on and if you need help or resources from our side of the house. The other thing is any family member that would come to your

aid should keep a current passport. Even our 757 pilots fly all over Mexico and Canada, so all our pilots are leaving the United States often. If something were to happen to you outside the country, think about expediting a family member to come see you where you are or to be with you. Having a current passport will help expedite that. It's really important to have those emergency contact phone numbers for the Company side. You don't want to delay your family being called if something's happened to you. You don't want your family to find out of an emergency or accident from a third party, from a friend that doesn't have the right information, from the news, from TV or social media. Having those phone numbers current will help the company get a direct contact to your family in case something happens.

Captain Chris Lee Well, are there any final thoughts about the CAL program or the emergency contact information?

First Officer Kandy Bernskoetter These are just ways to help you and your family if something doesn't go quite right. So, I really encourage all pilots to participate.

Captain Chris Lee Well, thanks again, Kandy, and thanks for listening. If you have any questions or topic ideas, please send us an email to fdxpodcast@alpa.org. And as always, be safe out there and we'll see you next time.