



# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

CAPTAIN CHUCK DYER | FEDEX-MECCHAIR@ALPA.ORG



Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is way past time that long-awaited action is finally being considered by various regulatory agencies to address threats posed by lithium battery shipments. We are asking that this risk be mitigated, and that appropriate regulations and procedures be enacted. Congress is considering amendments to the FAA Reauthorization bill in the weeks ahead. We are hopeful this issue will receive their attention and common sense improvements will occur. This existing threat to your personal safety dictates that you absolutely need to take part in this effort now.

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We have requested meetings with FDX management to share our concerns regarding *lithium battery* shipments. We believe the best and fastest way to mitigate the risk lithium batteries create is for FDX management to work directly with those of us that are the most exposed to this risk. According to Boeing and Airbus, a lithium battery fire in flight presents a potential hazard that cannot currently be controlled with existing aircraft fire suppression systems. As such, it presents an unacceptable level of risk! The aircraft manufacturers have recommended that carriers that choose to carry lithium batteries conduct a risk assessment. We have been informed by management that this has not been completed for all of the bulk shipments we carry, and to date we have not been included in any pertinent risk assessment that may have been performed. With all the information and warnings regarding lithium battery shipments that have emerged over the last few months in particular, a steady drumbeat of alarm is beating. It is absolutely time to engage this issue in a most serious manner.

While meaningful regulations on the packaging and shipment of lithium batteries will no doubt increase the cost to manufacturers, and this could result in some shippers choosing other less expensive modes of transport, we believe the current system presents an unacceptable risk for loss of life.

We will always face some undefinable risk as a result of undeclared hazardous material shipments through our system. Illegal behavior has to be dealt with aggressively and the penalties should be serious for these lawbreakers. That in no way should be construed as an excuse to allow known hazardous shipments to pass through our system without appropriate packaging and handling

requirements in place.

As it currently stands, many lithium batteries are exempted from some of the most important DG safety procedures that apply to other DG, and there is no limit to the number of these batteries that can be loaded on our aircraft. Unfortunately, these Section 2 lithium batteries are shipped by FedEx with very little regard to the hazard they present. They are not handled within our DG system, and consequently they are randomly loaded with no regard to the risk they create. When I first heard about this, I was dumbfounded. I immediately reached out to management and asked that we work together to face this risk. I am hopeful that this collaborative effort can begin soon.

In the meantime, we will continue our effort to seek regulatory relief through all channels available to us. Your fellow FDX ALPA pilot volunteers are serving in multiple capacities in pursuit of common sense regulation of this very serious threat. Some are working on the SAE Lithium Battery Packaging Working Group commissioned by ICAO to develop packaging standards. Some are engaging the FAA and the ICAO Dangerous Goods Panel. Ultimately, our entire Lithium Battery working group is doing all that they can to educate our U.S. legislators as well as international bodies charged with regulatory oversight of dangerous goods shipments aboard aircraft.

The upcoming FAA reauthorization bill renewal provides another important opportunity to obtain common sense regulation that will minimize the risk to us and our families.

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The profit motive that is essential to the success of our corporation cannot trump potential loss of life. The hazard associated with these battery shipments is recognized by aircraft manufacturers ([Boeing](#) & [Airbus](#)) as well as other regulatory agencies, but so far meaningful regulation has been slow in coming. The lobbying effort of the Rechargeable Battery Association (PRBA) and manufactures such as Dell, Apple, and others has so far managed to place their business costs ahead of your personal safety. We have created a [Lithium Battery webpage](#) that consolidates information related to this important issue. Please take a moment to become familiar with this [webpage](#).

To be clear, we do not seek to limit the shipment of these batteries when they are installed in or shipped with a device. We support the development of standards and procedures to ensure the safe transport of all lithium battery shipments. We do, however, take exception with bulk shipments of batteries transported under regulations that do not recognize the unmitigated risk they currently create and are simply advocating for common sense safety measures.

To ensure the safe transport of lithium batteries, we believe Congress should let the Department of Transportation regulate lithium battery shipments to mitigate the recognized dangers of their transport and that our safety measures not be constrained by international standards. The hazard is just too great!

In the meantime, I encourage you to correspond with your congressional representatives and ask for their support in establishing common sense regulation.

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Respectfully,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles W. Dyer".

Captain Chuck Dyer  
FedEx MEC Chairman



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