



AIR INDIA TO DOCK SALARIES OF PILOTS REFUSING TO FLY AT 11TH HOUR

News / Airlines



National carrier Air India (AI) has decided to dock salaries of pilots who pull out of flights for which they are rostered for at the eleventh hour.

According to the new pay structure cleared by the government, if a pilot refuses to operate a flight, which he has been rostered for, he would be liable for reduction of double flight hours from his flying allowance.

The new pay structure, as first reported by HT on January 16, includes stiff penalty clauses and requires pilots to fly a minimum 40 hours a month to be entitled to their monthly salary.

In the event of refusal four hours prior to the departure, double the number of hours will be deducted for the scheduled flight of up to six hours. "For flights more than six hours, a flat deduction of 14 hours will be made from the guaranteed flying allowance," says the government order. "The guaranteed hour will be payable only if the pilot has made himself available for flying duties for 150 days in a period of six months. Further, the guaranteed 70 hours will be payable only if the actual flying is more than 40 hours."

"These steps will help instil the much-needed discipline in the airline. It would also help cut down delays and improve AI's on-time performance," said aviation expert Subhash Goyal.

Pilots can be told about roster changes through SMS, telephone, WhatsApp, email, said the new salary order. “Non-acceptance of change of flight communicated will amount to refusal of the flight. Non-acknowledgement will also be taken as refusal of the flight,” the order added.

“This move was necessitated as there had been cases where pilots would not take calls on their mobiles. So it had become a real problem to convey the flight schedule to some of them,” said a senior AI official.

The new salary order, which was implemented from January 1, 2016, also brings to an end the acrimonious issue of “pay parity” between the erstwhile Indian Airlines (AI) and Air India pilots. According to the order, all pilots irrespective of the aircraft they fly will get a fixed monthly salary for 70 hours of flying.

“CMD Ashwani Lohani has started delivering on his promises. A uniform pay structure was much needed,” Goyal said.

While salaries of erstwhile IA pilots will go up, those of AI will take a hit even as the total pilot wage bill of around Rs 1,000 crore will increase by about `60 crore.

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