



Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO
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FLIGHT ATTENDANTS FILES SUIT AGAINST FEDERAL AGENCIES

Washington, DC – The Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA-CWA) today filed a complaint in District Court against Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Marion Blakely for their failure to ensure the health and safety of flight attendants and other employees working in the airline industry.

Flight attendants encounter a wide variety of occupational hazards while working aboard commercial flights including turbulence, severe changes in cabin air pressure, unwieldy service carts, exposure to toxic chemicals, unruly and sick passengers, threats of terrorism and emergency evacuations. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics, flight attendants suffer injuries and illnesses four times more frequently than workers in private industry and more than twice as often as those in construction.

Under The Occupational Safety and Health (The OSH Act) of 1970, the Secretary of Labor is empowered to assure “every working man and woman in the nation safe and healthful working conditions” unless another federal agency exercises authority. In 1975, the FAA asserted jurisdiction over the health and safety of crewmembers on civil aircraft, yet has failed to enforce basic standards.

“For 30 years we’ve been trying to get the FAA to take responsibility, but they have repeatedly ignored the health and safety of flight attendants,” said Patricia Friend, AFA-CWA International President. “By their own admission the FAA has failed to recognize the aircraft cabin as a workplace. It is long past time for that attitude to be reversed.”

In 1990, after repeated attempts to implore the FAA to improve conditions, AFA-CWA filed a petition asking the agency to adopt selected OSH Act safety regulations. Seven years later, the FAA responded citing that AFA-CWA’s issues did not constitute an immediate safety concern and denied the petition due to “budgetary constraints.”

AFA-CWA’s complaint is asking the court to issue an order declaring that the FAA has failed to exercise its asserted jurisdiction to establish occupational health and safety standards for flight attendants and crewmembers. And, as a result, the Secretary of Labor has failed to fulfill her statutory duty under the OSH Act to ensure healthful working conditions for flight attendants.

75 Years of Safety & Service: 60 Years of Unity

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the flight attendant profession and the 60th anniversary of the Association of Flight Attendants. More than 46,000 flight attendants, join together to form AFA-CWA, the world’s largest flight attendant union. AFA is part of the 700,000-member strong Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO. Visit us at www.afanet.org.

INFLIGHT SAFETY PROFESSIONALS



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