

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

FEDERAL AVIATION AGENCY

TO : Chief, Medical Standards Division, AS-20 DATE: February 16, 1960

FROM : Chief, Rules and Procedures Branch
Office of the Civil Air SurgeonSUBJECT: Age 55 Transition for Pilots of Turbojet Aircraft

1. PROBLEM:

Proposal to establish a maximum age of 55 for pilots transitioning to turbojet carrier aircraft.

2. ASSUMPTIONS:

- a. The flight characteristics of a sweptwing airplane are different from the straight wing.
- b. The time spent in transitioning is an economic factor primarily of concern only to airlines.

3. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM:

- a. Comments on Draft Release 59-4-5-6 totaled 91. In favor were 8 pilots, 19 individuals, and 5 associations; against were 12 pilots, 29 individuals, and 9 associations; neutral 5 associations and 4 individuals.
- b. Public hearing held January 7, 1960, with three individuals representing two associations and one person speaking for himself.
- c. Until recent years, there have been no pilots learning new tasks of flying, i. e. they were transitioning from DC6 to a 7. Only with the advent of jets has the problem of learning, compensation by experience, etc. come up.
- d. The proposed rule would affect only those over 55 now. Those who have not reached their 55th birthday will obtain jet ratings and will use or will not use them as they desire.
- e. Flight Safety Foundation reports "No medical justification could be found for changing medical qualifications for airmen as the result of jet or turboprop transport operation."
- f. The small response of persons at the hearing might be indicative of little interest, or unwillingness to expose the strategy in view of Senator Monroney's hearings.

4. DISCUSSION:

a. Conditions favoring proposal

- (1) The passing of this rule would strengthen the age 60 maximum utilization.
- (2) AF experience that (1) in century series fighters the accident potential in pilots 40 years and over is extremely high, (2) transition flying in jet aircraft involves an accident potential three times as high as non-transition flying in the same type of equipment, and (3) jet bomber accident rate increases almost directly with the age level of the pilot.

b. Conditions against proposal

- (1) The length of transition time has no bearing on this proposal as the pilots have been declared proficient by FAA inspectors.
- (2) Safety is not involved as we still allow pilots to fly turbojet powered carrier aircraft up to age 60.
- (3) There is no concrete medical evidence that these men will not safely be able to handle the transition.

5. CONCLUSION:

- a. Medically we cannot back this rule if done in the interest of safety.

6. ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- a. Age 55 proposal concerning transition to turbojet carrier aircraft be set aside for the present.
- b. Continued study of transition be made and if any need for the proposal arises in the future, publish the proposed rule at that time.

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