

## APA Opposes 25-Hour Cockpit Voice Recorders

**APA Opposition:** The Allied Pilots Association did not support the 25-hour Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) mandate that was included in the 2024 FAA Reauthorization Act, which requires that all newly manufactured large commercial aircraft include a 25-hour CVR capability within one year after the passage of the Act.

APA did not support this change because an extended CVR recording time beyond the current two-hour CVR *will not* dramatically improve accident and incident reconstruction for the purpose of enhancing flight safety. APA, along with other professional pilot organizations and noted flight safety experts, believed that this invasion of privacy and extended recording time will have the *opposite* effect – the pervasive recording will have a chilling effect on the open cockpit communication that is the cornerstone of Crew Resource Management (CRM).

Finally, APA expresses deep concern over industry initiatives aimed at enabling live streaming of Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) data. Fielding such a capability would represent an extraordinary breach of privacy, particularly on flights where no immediate safety concerns exist. Live streaming CVR data threatens to fundamentally alter cockpit dynamics, undermining the trust and candor essential to effective crew communication. The result could have a chilling effect on cockpit communications that compromises operational safety rather than enhancing it.

**APA Recommendations:** The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 is now enacted law, and aircraft with 25-hour CVRs are already being delivered. As of fall 2025, over 60 new-build American Airlines aircraft (737s, A321s and 787s) are equipped with the 25-hour CVR. Additionally, within six years all large commercial aircraft will be retrofitted with 25-hour CVRs. While we are disappointed with this outcome, we are pleased that the Act includes language protecting against unlawful or unauthorized disclosure of CVR data to the public. The Act further specifies that CVR data is to be used exclusively by a federal agency or a foreign accident investigative agency for criminal investigation, aircraft accident, or aircraft incident investigation, and that the data is not to be deliberately erased or tampered with.

Unfortunately, *this type of language has existed for years and exists today in a variety of CFRs and FARs, yet unauthorized disclosures continue to occur.* 25-hour CVRs are recorded and transmitted on digital media and as such they will be even more susceptible to loss and disclosure. It is not a question of “if,” but “when.” The Act also specifies that the “Administrator or any covered operator may not use a cockpit voice recorder recording for certificate action, civil penalty, or disciplinary proceedings against a flight crewmember,” but it does not limit other federal agencies, or individuals, from seeking civil liability from flight crews.

Given these facts, APA recommends more action be taken to:

- Establish enforceable steep federal penalties and personal liability for loss or unauthorized disclosure of CVR (or cockpit image recorder) data.
- Add verbiage that requires a foreign investigative agency to work *in conjunction with* (and not independent of) a US federal agency such as the NTSB, FAA, or FBI.
- Strengthen language preventing a federal agency, operator/commercial entity, or individual from seeking civil penalties or legal liability for an involved flight crew member in all cases except for exceedingly rare instances of willful, purposeful malfeasance.
- Prohibit the live streaming of CVR data.

For questions or additional information please email [GAC-Chairman@alliedpilots.org](mailto:GAC-Chairman@alliedpilots.org)