



FEDERATION OF INDIAN PILOTS

FIP/ /MOHFW/21 - 04

08th April 2021

To

Shri Rajesh Bhushan IAS
Secretary
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Government of India
Nirman Bhavan
Maulana Azad Road
New Delhi -110011

Sub: Classification of Commercial Pilots as Front Line Workers (FLW) For Covid Vaccination

Sir ,

The Federation of Indian Pilots (FIP) is a registered body committed to aviation safety and comprises a membership of approximately 5000 commercial pilots based all across India.

Our members represent the entire Indian aviation sector covering all the major scheduled airlines (such as Air India, Indigo, Vistara, Spice Jet, Go Air etc) , regional air taxi operators, non-scheduled and private corporate entities.

Aviators have unflinchingly served the nation during the past one year in the midst of the crippling Covid-19 pandemic and enabled many relief and rescue operations, including the Vande Bharat Mission - aerial lifelines that have connected millions of our countrymen across the world. Many pilots have been detected Covid +ve in the line of duty, whilst some have lost their lives or their loved ones - in a stark realisation of the fact that this is one battle where the hidden enemy comes home with the warrior . Yet the majority of our colleagues continue to unconditionally face danger every day in the biohazard frontline.

It has come as a huge disappointment to the aviation community therefore, that while many other categories of transport related workers such as Indian Railways employees, and police personnel posted at airports /railway establishments have been categorised as Front Line Workers (FLW) for the purpose of being prioritised for the Covid vaccine, the commercial pilots of India have been left out.

We feel that such an exclusion of mission critical aviation personnel from the category of FLW, compounded with the lack of mandatory testing exposes a huge gap in our national effort to combat the disease.

Not only does the exclusion of pilots from the category of FLW undermine the tremendous risks undertaken by our members and reflects a degree of apathy for the lives of pilots and their families- it also exposes the majority of aircrew, passengers, and the public to a potential chain of infection

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from asymptomatic aviators who may inadvertently become super spreaders by virtue of their constant global mobility during the deadly second Covid wave that has now swept across many parts of the world.

It would be appreciated that commercial pilots comprise the main backbone of our nation's critical infrastructure. Air transportation of Covid vaccines will continue to be essential to fight back against the virus and return to normal. Therefore, it is imperative that pilots are kept fit and operationally active by being administered the vaccine.

Furthermore, the fact that aircrew are not vaccinated does not auger well for passenger confidence - an erosion of which could further weaken the financial condition of the sector.

It is therefore requested that commercial pilots of all age groups in India are immediately categorised as Front Line Workers (FLW) so that they may be given priority and unrestricted, voluntary access to Covid vaccines.

Thanking you

Yours faithfully

Capt. Surinder Mehta
President – Federation of Indian Pilots



cc: Secretary NDMA

cc: Secretary MoCA

cc: Secretary MHA

cc: Secretary MEA

cc: DG ICMR

cc: President, FICCI

cc: President, ASSOCHAM