

Did COVID Vaccine Injuries Influence FAA's Revision of Electrocardiogram Test Limits for Pilots?

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A recent update to the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) electrocardiogram (EKG) test limits for pilots has some aviation and medical experts questioning if the FAA's move is concerned that COVID-19 vaccine injuries may be contributing to an ongoing shortage of pilots.

The FAA on Oct. 26, 2022, [changed](#) its [Guide for Aviation Medical Examiners](#) (AME), increasing the acceptable "PR interval" from 200 to 300 milliseconds — a 50% increase.

The [PR interval](#) — the time it takes for an electrical impulse to be transmitted from one part of the heart to another — is a [key indicator of heart health](#).

The FAA [did not publicly announce the revision](#) and, according to Just the News, also [has not disclosed the data](#) used to justify the change.

[US Freedom Flyers](#) (USFF), an advocacy group opposed to COVID-19 vaccine mandates for pilots, detected the change last month, [The Epoch Times reported](#).

The USFF and some vaccine safety advocates suggested the FAA revised the limits because airlines' vaccine mandates, which some argued [violated FAA regulations](#), resulted in a significant number of [pilots sustaining adverse events](#).

The revelations surfaced amid claims the [FAA did not investigate](#) multiple cases of vaccine-injured pilots, including incidents where disaster nearly occurred, and that there is [increasing demand for unvaccinated pilots](#).

[Some critics called for FAA officials](#) to resign, alleging the vaccines endangered the health of pilots and the public.

‘A lot of pilots and a lot of damage’

[According to Just the News](#), federal agencies “are withholding the data behind recent decisions that relate or may relate to COVID-19 vaccines and severe adverse events.”

The FAA “raised the maximum so-called PR interval for first-degree atrioventricular [AV] block to 300 milliseconds, with no regard to age, on the list of ‘normal variants’ that don’t require deferment in the absence of ‘symptoms or AME concerns.’”

This means the FAA now considers more health conditions to be acceptable.

Steve Kirsch, founder of the [Vaccine Safety Research Foundation](#), said the new range “accommodates people who have cardiac injury.”

Multiple pilots have come forward to [report cardiac injury](#) and other adverse effects following their COVID-19 vaccination, as [previously reported by The Defender](#).

Josh Yoder, a commercial pilot and co-founder of USFF, told The Epoch Times he believes the FAA’s changes are “a ticking time bomb on a level like we’ve never seen,” and that they increase the odds that a pilot’s heart condition will go undetected, which increases the risk of an aviation disaster.

Kirsch called the changes “extraordinary,” adding, “They did it hoping nobody would notice.” He said the change is “a tacit admission from the U.S. government that the COVID vaccine has [damaged the hearts of our pilots](#). Not just a few pilots. A lot of pilots and a lot of damage.”

The FAA disputed the claims — as did media “fact checkers.”

There is “no evidence of aircraft accidents or incapacitations caused by pilots suffering medical complications associated with COVID-19 vaccines,” the FAA told The Epoch Times.

But Kirsch and others said this is because the FAA never investigated those incidents.

The FAA also said, “When making changes to medical requirements and guidance, the FAA follows standard processes based on data and science.”

Yet the agency did not release the data used to make the revision, despite media requests, including from [Tucker Carlson](#), host of Fox News “Tucker Carlson Tonight.”

In a statement to Just the News, the FAA claimed it followed “standard processes based on data and science” that allowed it to “safely raise the tolerance used to screen for a certain heart condition.”

Federal Air Surgeon Dr. Susan Northrup said the FAA has “seen no evidence” of vaccine injuries that led to “aircraft accidents or pilot incapacitations.”

[The Associated Press](#), in a “[fact check](#)” said the FAA’s revision wasn’t prompted by adverse events among pilots following COVID-19 vaccination. The AP, citing the FAA, said, “This change was made in response to new scientific evidence” from the FAA’s “cardiology consultants.”

Cardiologists weigh in

In a Jan. 5 essay, [cardiologist Thomas Levy, M.D., J.D.](#), called the FAA's new guideline "arguably a shocking one, as many pilots are in the same age range when heart attacks occur without any early symptoms but with a normal ECG — the ECG being the only mandatory heart-related test."

"A fatal heart attack from very advanced coronary artery disease could occur 10 minutes after the normal ECG was recorded," Levy added.

While a PR interval longer than 200 ms doesn't prove, on its own, that there is a heart problem, it "shouldn't be ignored," Levy told The Epoch Times, and warrants additional testing, as the heart may "no longer [be] completely healthy, and the conduction rate is slowing down."

A PR interval even slightly exceeding 200 ms "is clearly associated with arrhythmias in the future, pacemakers, and early death," Levy said, adding that this is especially concerning in light of the [increased prevalence of myocarditis](#) in recent years, noting that the condition can contribute to a longer PR interval.

A sudden burst of adrenalin, such as one caused by a stressful in-flight situation, can bring this problem to light, said Levy, adding that myocarditis can strike suddenly and without prior warning signs.

Military flight surgeon [Dr. Theresa Long](#), during an appearance on "Tucker Carlson Tonight," said the new interval "does not improve safety." She noted that unlike military pilots, who get EKGs annually regardless of age, commercial pilots receive one at age 35 and then annually starting at age 40.

Long told The Epoch Times cardiologists have always told her, "It would be negligent ... to see a PR interval of 290 and do nothing." Long said she was puzzled and concerned by the FAA's new limit and that it was not typical for the agency to make such a change without citing specific evidence or studies.

Former FAA safety inspector Stephen Carbone called the new guidelines "nothing short of safety sacrilege" and an "assault on aviation safety," adding, "I can't highlight enough how dangerous this is and how irresponsible."

Dr. Peter Chambers, a retired U.S. military special operations flight surgeon, said the new guidelines remove "the 'safety zone' that allows us to catch the problem early," adding, "You're not even allowed to ask the questions" about adverse health effects experienced by vaccinated pilots.

What's behind pilot shortage?

Epidemiologist Dr. Andrew Bostom said the most likely explanation for the FAA's change "[is very benign and practical](#): the airlines are losing pilots by attrition." Bostom didn't attribute the attrition to pilot vaccine injuries, but others are making this connection.

[Kirsch](#), for instance, wrote:

"I'll take an educated guess as to why [the FAA] did that. I believe it is because they

knew if they kept the original range, too many pilots would have to be grounded. That would be extremely problematic; commercial aviation in the U.S. would be severely disrupted.

“In other words, the COVID vaccine has seriously injured a lot of pilots and the FAA knows it and said nothing because that would tip off the country that the vaccines are unsafe. And you aren’t allowed to do that.”

Kirsch noted that the timing of the October 2022 change — two years after the onset of the pandemic — rules out COVID-19.

“October 2022 is late for COVID,” Kirsch said. “If it was due to COVID, it would have happened well before now. They can make changes every month.”

According to a July 2022 report by [Oliver Wyman Insights](#), “an [impending pilot shortage](#) was on the horizon” in early 2021, and it is now materializing, due to an aging workforce and mandatory retirement age of 65, and “a wave of early retirements at the height of the pandemic,” though the report didn’t specify the reason for that.

Vaccine-injured former pilot Bob Snow confirmed for The Defender the growing shortage of pilots in the U.S., noting that “former military aviators are a traditional source of pilots for the airlines, but the military no longer produces pilots in large numbers, so there is now a shortfall.”

“The airline industry does not seem as attractive to the younger generation as with prior generations,” Snow added.

FAA not investigating pilot vaccine injuries

The FAA never imposed a vaccine mandate on pilots, but the agency did issue [“guidance” for pilots to get vaccinated](#). Many airlines and employers did impose mandates.

FAA [regulations prohibit pilots](#) from taking non-FDA-approved medical products, such as those issued under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA), but the FAA overlooked this rule when advising pilots to receive the COVID-19 vaccines — which were [issued under an EUA](#).

The Defender has previously reported on adverse events sustained by multiple commercial, military and private pilots and by [air traffic controllers](#), following their COVID-19 vaccination. Some pilots lost their jobs, [some even lost their lives](#).

Snow, for instance, suffered a heart attack six minutes after landing his commercial flight and is currently unable to fly, while Cody Flint narrowly averted a crash of his own.

When [Kirsch emailed Northrup](#) last week, soon after the change in the FAA’s guidelines were known, and he later [spoke with Northrup by phone](#). According to Kirsch, Northrup revealed that neither she, nor anyone else at the FAA, investigated incidents like Snow’s.

Kirsch wrote:

“At first I thought she was lying, but it turns out she was telling the truth. She’s seen no evidence because even though she admitted on the call that she knew about Bob Snow, nobody at the FAA ever bothered to call him. Ever!!! So they’ve never seen the

evidence because they deliberately refused to look at the evidence!!”

Kirsch asked Northrup to provide the data the FAA used to justify the guidelines change, to investigate pilot vaccine injuries and to host a public roundtable to “discuss the ‘safe and effective’ narrative” regarding COVID-19 vaccines and pilot safety.

He also asked Northrup to respond to the Aug.1, 2022, revelation by author [Alex Berenson](#), a former journalist with The New York Times, that the pilots’ union at a major U.S. air carrier internally reported a 300% rise in long-term disability claims among its mostly vaccinated members.

“If she doesn’t hold a roundtable,” wrote Kirsch in one [blog post](#), “it will be further confirmation that the FAA is afraid to investigate the safety issues.”

Kirsch also publicly [called on Northrup to resign](#), adding that “if she doesn’t, the FAA should fire her” as “she has put the lives of pilots, FAA employees, and the public at risk by her abject failure to investigate safety concerns associated with the COVID vaccines.”

Kirsch added:

“I know of people inside the FAA and pilots who have been killed or permanently disabled because they followed the FAA’s directive to be vaccinated. Susan has not called any of these people to investigate. Nobody from the FAA has. That is a dereliction of duty.”

Kirsch noted that [Northrup’s husband](#), John Hyle, is a pilot who “refused to take the COVID vaccine due to safety concerns.”

Others expressed similar concerns about the FAA’s actions — or inaction. At the Jan. 21 [Restore Freedom Rally](#) in Orlando, Florida, [Yoder said](#), “The FAA is not upset that they’re killing pilots. They’re upset that we caught them.”

On Jan. 22, [Yoder tweeted](#):

"The Airlines should have demanded of the FAA that they do proper studies on these substances before they were injected into pilots. This would have stopped the entire program if the Airlines had pushed back. The FAA did zero safety studies."[@JoshYoder](#)

— US Freedom Flyers (@USFreedomFlyers) [January 22, 2023](#)

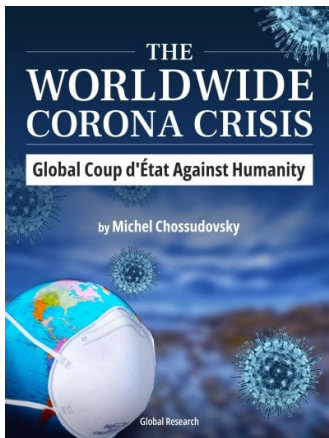
Kirsch is planning a [roundtable in collaboration](#) with USFF, The Highwire and Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.). [Kirsch described it](#) as “a public hearing where we will put all the pilot and FAA employee injuries in full public view, including what actions the FAA took to investigate each injury.”

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