

Pilots on 14-hour shifts ‘more likely to crash’

Making pilots work up to 14 hours a day could lead to more accidents, MPs were warned.

Crew could be landing aircraft 22 hours after starting their day under new EU guidelines that were dubbed ‘a danger to public safety’.

They could also be forced to fly as far as California with no back-up and work up to seven early starts in a row, said pilots’ union Balpa.

Safety boss Dr Rob Hunter told a commons transport committee that polls showed 43 per cent of pilots had fallen asleep on duty – but the figure was an underestimation.

He later explained the 22 hours calculation was based on a pilot leaving for work at 5am to be at the airport for 7am to be assigned a flight.

Union leader Jim McAuslan said: ‘We need the government to say it won’t support this danger to public safety and will demand that we either get the proposals to a much safer position, or retain our own domestic rules.’

Jon Horne of the European Cockpit Association said there was an almost six times higher chance of an accident when shifts topped 13 hours.

But CAA boss Andrew Haines said pilot fatigue was ‘not an exact science’ and aviation minister Theresa Villiers said the plans would ‘broadly’ align standards across the continent.

Read more: <http://www.metro.co.uk/news/891108-pilots-on-14-hour-shifts-more-likely-to-crash#ixzz1oRRzYCob>