



# AIRMAIL

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers District 141 Newsletter

2018 Safety Conference

# 4

**Ways to Leave  
Work in Total  
Pain**

**"IT STARTS WITH ONE CAN..."**

**How EWR 914 Saved Thanksgiving**

**IAM141  
SAFETY  
FIRST**

**2018 IAM141 Safety  
Conference**

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## A Quick Word...

### Welcome to the 2018 Safety Conference.

As we wrap up the IAM141 Safety Conference I want to take a few seconds to acknowledge all the hard work that has gone into getting this very important meeting put together. I want everyone involved to know how much I personally appreciate all the work that you do on behalf of the membership.

**You may have noticed.** This Safety Conference is the largest event of its kind in the airline industry. It's also the only venue of its size that combines companies, Federal regulators, and airline employees from our union, all at the same table. No other gathering has more authority, expertise or

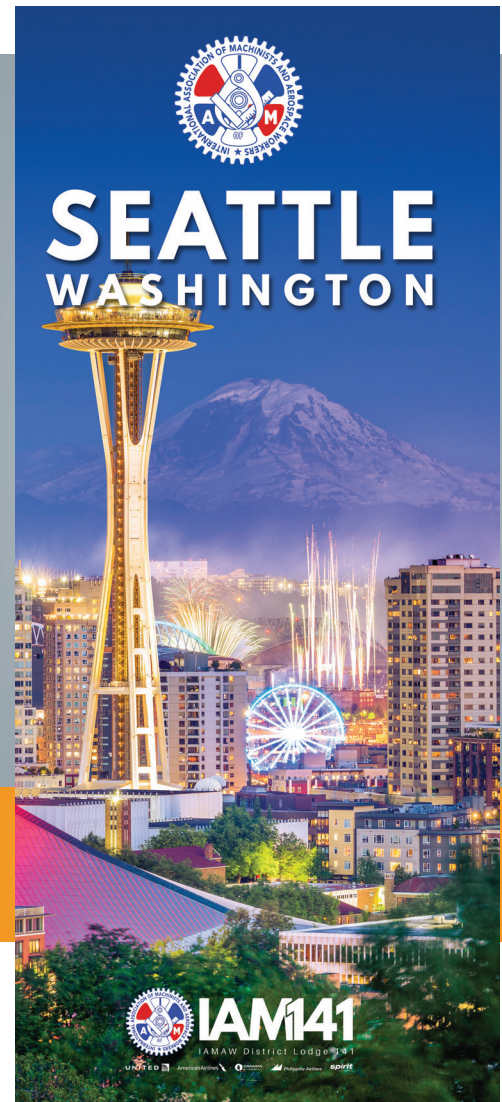
opportunity to make sweeping changes to the way that our industry operates than we have at District 141 right now.

Finally, this union broke more records this Thanksgiving, by moving the largest number of air travelers in the history of the industry. **Be proud of the work that you do.**

Thanks again,

**Mike Klemm**

President and Directing General Chair,  
IAM District 141



P6

## Seattle Local 1351 President Boosts Hometown, Local Lodge

Ask anyone at Local 1351 in Seattle, and they will struggle to remember a time when Al Yamada wasn't president. Al has served as president of Local 1351 for so long, in fact, that only the most senior IAM Members at Seattle's Sea-Tac airport can remember anyone else in the role.

With a naturally easy going and friendly demeanor, Al tends to avoid accepting too much praise, preferring instead to direct attention to the Local Lodge that he clearly loves, and to Seattle. There's a lot to be proud of; Seattle's Local 1351 has a long history in the IAM. In fact, the local is one of the original District 141 lodges, founded all the way back in 1945.

When asked about when his first term as President began, Al will merely dismiss the topic, "sometime in the '90s," he will say. If

you ask those who know him well, they will say that he has been president for at least the past 20 years, after working as a Shop Steward and a Safety Advocate for a short time.

Asked about how much longer he intends to stay in the role, Al called out to a nearby Union Activist, Phil Pascua, and asked him if he would take over the office so he could step down. "Hell no," Pascua replied. Instantly.

Serving as Local Lodge President can be a tough job.

Born and raised in the area, he knows the city intimately; and he is unabashedly proud of his hometown. He even dedicated part of his speech to making sure that everyone at the conference knew how to use public transportation to get around downtown.



Al Yamada is also more than willing to point out the many things he loves about Local 1351. His innate humility vanishes when it comes to the union members at Local 1351. As the topic switches to the men and women of his local, he knows everyone, and everyone knows him. It's clear that he's talking about friends that he cares about... much more than mere coworkers.

**Al Yamada welcomed the 2018 Safety Conference to Seattle in December, delivering the opening remarks. The annual IAM141 Safety Conference brings together top safety experts in Aviation.**

## SEA Welcomes 2018 IAM141 Safety Conference

The IAM141 Safety Conference attracts hundreds of commercial aviation safety experts in the name of improving airline safety.

**Safety experts from the Machinists Union and North America's largest airlines gathered in Seattle this week in the name of creating a safer environment for airline workers and travelers.**

The event has become one of the largest and most influential safety conferences of its kind, attracting top thinkers and decision-makers from the world of commercial aviation.

This year, attendees toured the nearby Boeing Factory in Everett, Washington. The plant is one of the largest aircraft production facilities in North America and home to thousands of Machinists Union members.

Attendees included representatives from the nation's airlines, including United and American. The two carriers are working together with the IAM to develop new safety reporting standards at American Airlines.

Erik Stenberg, Director of Safety for IAM District 141, praised the companies for their efforts to improve airline safety, saying, "There is no such thing as balance when it comes to safety. There is no 'us' and 'them' when it comes to protecting our members and the flying public. We can have both a safe work environment and an on-time operation. But, we can't have an on-time operation without safety."

Airline representatives also hailed the communication and networking opportunities created by assembling so many experts, company decision-makers, and union leaders at the same venue, to work on the topic of safety together.

"I think that this is a great example of team building," said United Airlines Safety Supervisor, Gary Snead. "We are also building from what we started last year, and you can just feel the unity that we've been able to create since then."

**The IAM 141 Safety Conference is an annual event, hosted by the District 141 of the Machinists Union, which is the largest union of aerospace workers.**



Safety



is no accident.



**The IAM141 Safety Conference** is an annual event that brings together union leaders and activists, company representatives and workplace safety experts from around the nation to discuss the topic of workplace safety.

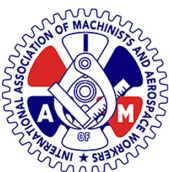
For more information, visit [IAM141.org](http://IAM141.org).





## Love Movies With Subtitles?

Of course not. Use your hearing protection.



December 2018  
**IAM 141 Safety**  
CONFERENCE

# IAM141 Safety Committee

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IAM141 Safety Chairman.



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## “It Starts With One Can..”

### Local 914 EWR Community Service Sets a Thanksgiving Feast for 15 Families.

**Fresh off the 68th District 141 Convention in Orlando, Florida, Debbie Inverno was energized and motivated.** As a Shop Steward and Chair of the Community Service Committee at Local 914 in Newark, NJ, she had been collecting nonperishable food donations from members for a few months, but without a defined project in mind. The work that the Community Services Committee did at the Convention changed all that:

“What Cristina said made it all click,” said

Debbie. “She told the committee: “It starts with one can...and you keep going.””

The words of Cristina Odoardi, a District 141 Trustee who was advising the Community Services Committee at the Convention made a big difference to Debbie Inverno. Since she already had one can, Debbie figured all she needed was the impetus to take the next step, and it came to her in Cristina’s simple call: “Keep going.”

Soon after her return to New Jersey, Debbie found out about Hope House, an emergency



#### SETTING TABLES, EXAMPLE

*Local 914 Community Service Committee members Lee Carpenter, Victor Acosta, Regina Novicky, Chair Debbie Inverno, Hope House Residential Assistant Lisa Ginn, Local 914 President Bill Gula and Hector Perez.*



#### MORE THAN ONE TRIP

*Local 914 President Bill Gula needs to make several trips to carry everything in.*



shelter for women and children near Newark. Her son, a Port Authority Police Officer, was familiar with their work and Debbie was convinced that this was the perfect fit for the local’s community service work. She had found another incentive to keep going.

Debbie kept going nonstop for the next two weeks. After making an initial call for donations, she posted an update with a picture every day on the Local 914 Facebook wall. She shared the news in other social media outlets where she knew her co-



**Fifteen families who currently reside at Hope House will celebrate Thanksgiving with a traditional meal thanks to our members' generosity**

*-Debbie Inverno*



### ← REAL COMPASSION

*Some of the food collected, and a ceramic turkey.*

Debbie said as she unloaded her car with the help of Local 914 Community Service Committee members Lee Carpenter and Regina Novicky. "Fifteen families who currently reside at Hope House will celebrate Thanksgiving with a traditional meal thanks to our members' generosity."

Local 914 President Bill Gula also lent a hand unloading over 30 bags of groceries and five turkeys at the shelter. He praised the work that was accomplished in a relatively short period of time: "Debbie's successful effort is simply outstanding. She was the engine that got this project to this beautiful completion. We are grateful to all the members who contributed and for Debbie's leadership and big heart. Happy Thanksgiving!"

According to Debbie Inverno, she's just getting started. She wants to "adopt" Hope House to continue to support their work. This was welcome news to Lisa Ginn, Residential Assistant at Hope House who was grateful for the Thanksgiving donation and was thrilled to hear that the Machinists will be back to continue to support the center's programs on behalf of homeless women

### ↑ LOCAL 914 EWR

*In all, 15 families were given Thanksgiving meals by EWR's Community Service Committee and Hope House.*

and children. "Service to the community, this is what we do," said Debbie. "And we have to keep going."

*This article originally appeared on IAM141.org. Photo Credit: Local 914.*



**Is your local saving the world?  
Fighting to bring dignity and respect  
to the community?**

**WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT!**

**EMAIL US AT:  
CONTACT@IAM141.ORG.**

**Remember to include pictures and  
contact info.**



workers at United Airlines in EWR go for news and updates. When the donations started pouring in, she picked up everything in person, collecting donations all over Newark Airport and even at co-workers' homes. She enlisted the help of her neighbors, whom she called "honorary union members" after they contributed three turkeys to the food drive. She also accepted cash donations and made several trips to the grocery store to personally pick up items to complete a full Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings. "Soup to nuts, there's even nuts in there!"

## More Safety Reporting Means More Safety Action

# Practice Makes Perfect

Fewer safety reports may be a sign that an airline is being less honest, not safer.

**Airlines all face the same fundamental challenges keeping travellers and workers safe. When one of these airlines refuses to report on these issues, it's not because their safety record is perfect. It's because it's hidden.**

Almost all airlines in the US fly the same planes, operate at the same airports, and fall under the same regulatory guidelines and workplace safety laws.

When airlines report more safety issues, fewer real catastrophes seem to happen. A higher number of reported safety incidents and near-misses does not mean that an airline is less safe. It might be a sign that the airline is practicing and learning more than the other guys.

Meanwhile, airlines that try to hide safety reports can miss opportunities to correct

problems while they are still small.

"All airlines have incidents every day," said Geoffrey Thomas, an industry analyst with AirlineRatings.com. "It is the way that flight crews handle incidents that determines a good airline from an unsafe one."

Airlines that closely monitor and study accidents get better and better at preventing them. The trick, according to Machinists Union District 141 Safety Director Kaulana Pakele, is for companies to learn to trust front-line employees. Pakele's work at Hawaiian Airlines takes him to work areas across the spectrum, including Customer Service, Cargo, Supplies, and Clerical & Stores. Hawaiian is recognized as one of the top 20 airlines in the world for its safety record, thanks in no small part to the work of Pakele and his

safety teams.

Hawaiian has essentially made every front-line employee a safety inspector, with a program called "Ground Safety Improvement Plan," called GSIP (pronounced Gee-Sip) by agents. The program allows any employee at the airline to put any safety concern they might have on blast - sending word to the FAA, OSHA, company managers and safety experts at the same time.

Other airlines have similar programs, like the GSAP program at United Airlines.

According to Pakele, putting employees into a leadership role when it comes to safety makes sense. It ensures that the people with the most to lose in an unsafe workplace have the most influence in developing and executing safety policies. It also makes sure that the



workers that know the most about the real-world operation are keeping upper management and safety regulators informed about how well company policies are working. All this can be done on a constant, hour by hour basis, and can provide valuable data that safety experts can integrate into policy.

However, this level of transparency can come with a price, especially if a company culture sees such reporting as adversarial rather than something that might save lives. Some passengers when learning about the reports may misinterpret them as evidence that an airline is unsafe, rather than see them as a tool to identify and correct policies and procedures.

Despite the potential drawbacks, Pakele is quick to point out the value of employee-directed safety programs. "The best argument for these programs is in how boring they are," Pakele jokes. "When they work, nothing happens. And that's the point."



## ↓ BETTER SAFE

*IAM141 HA Airlines Safety Director, Kaulana Pakele (on left)  
and IAM141 EAP Coordinator, Meki Pei.*



"There's a saying in Hawaii that we can use when we talk about safety," says IAM141 Safety Director for HA, Kaulana Pakele. "*E palekana kahana a e kākō'o kekahi i kekahi*," or, 'May the work be safe, and support one another.'





*Greg Brown is Legislative Coordinator with the IAM District 141 MNPL Department.*

“ One side has to harvest as much value as possible from employees and passengers, the other side has to put as much value as possible back in.

## Passengers and Unions On One Side, Executives and Investors on the Other

Airline workers and passengers are finding out that they're in the same boarding lane.



The Machinists are the largest union of airline workers on the planet, with members in every major (and most minor) airlines. In 2018, they used their industry-wide reach to fight for things that will make any frequent flyer happy: things like more legroom, funding for airport renovations, and protections against being forcibly removed from the plane.

The Machinists Non-Partisan League, or MNPL, is the part of the union that has historically worked to impact public policy in favor of airline workers. However, increasingly, it has been lobbying just as hard for things that benefit passengers, as well.

To find out why airline unions like the Ma-

chinists are beginning to champion air travellers alongside their own members, we spoke to Machinist District 141 MNPL Coordinator, Greg Brown.

“Every worker is also a consumer. That's how we participate in the economy. We work with customers, and then we become customers ourselves after work. So, what's good for consumers is good for workers. As airline workers, we operate at the passenger level. When we fly, our families do so at the passenger and consumer level.

At the executive level, they've often moved beyond playing a role as direct customers. They don't wait in lines. They don't walk up to cash registers. They don't interact with em-

ployees or customers on a regular basis. They are served, as clients, and that's usually it. At the executive level, it's easy to lose sight of what it's like to be a customer, and they certainly can lose sight of what it's like to be an employee. It's just not their ecosystem. Their peer group is made up of investors, certainly not consumers.”

**What about customer service? Isn't that a fundamental company value that helps passengers?**

“Sure, but not when it comes to real money. If company executives were to side with customers too much, they run the risk of alienating their investor-allies and partners. Their focus is exploitation; they need to harvest as



much value as they can from customers and employees. Executives and investors compete with customers and company workers for the same dollars. The more money that flows out of the pockets of customers and employees, the more dollars flow into the bank vaults of executives and investors.”

Executives and investors are consumers, too, of course. But, that’s not what most of their money does. Their allegiance is to the stockholder. They’re legally required to look out for the best financial interests of their investors. They’re never required by law to provide the best deals they can for customers or employees.”

#### How are unions different?

“Executives are legally required to make as much money for their investors as they can,

while unions are always required to serve passengers as well as they are able. It’s the complete opposite of the executive-investor. Executives take peanuts, and airline workers give peanuts. Airline workers have to care for passenger’s safety and property. It’s our job to make the passengers as comfortable and as happy as we can. That creates a values system that you can see reflected when we talk to lawmakers.”

#### So, are we stuck in an adversarial stand-off? Passengers and unions on one side, and executives and investors on the other?

“Not necessarily. We have to all agree to do what’s best for airlines. The difference is that unions can do things that bring up the entire industry. Companies can only really help themselves. They don’t want to improve their competitors.

And, it isn’t always adversarial; last year, the Machinists fought for things that are great for investors. We stopped at least \$20 million in new taxes that would have hit our airlines, for example. But, a lot of what we’ve done legislatively is not going to give a company a competitive advantage. So, companies won’t

fight for those things. I mean, what airline is going to demand that passengers have a little more legroom or bigger restrooms? Only unions would do something like that.

#### What’s Next?

I think that customers are starting to understand that they can tell a lot about how they will be treated as customers by looking at the way a company treats its employees. Companies that try to rip off their own workers are likely going to try to rip off their customers, too. A company culture that can’t respect the employees that do the actual work can’t respect customers, either.

The more people see and understand this, the more that it will start to sink in; empowered and respected workers create workplaces that are well suited for customer service. The best way to cultivate workers and workplaces like that is through the democratizing influence of unions.

## ← ONE SIDE, PLEASE

*In the airline industry, there is one culture for workers and passengers, another for executives and investors.*



## ↑ NOT AIRLINE EXECUTIVES

At the executive level, it’s easy to lose sight of what it’s like to be a customer, and they certainly can lose sight of what it’s like to be an employee. It’s just not their ecosystem.



## UNIONSAFE141 DATA

Airport work. What's the worst that can happen? **UnionSafe141.org** can tell you.

# 4 Ways to Leave Work in Total Pain.

Newly Released Research by UnionSafe141 has info for airline workers looking to avoid the OJI Pain Train.

**Try to think of something that will ruin your day at work, and airline workers are probably dealing with that exact thing right now, while you are reading this.**

Extreme weather, exhaustion, heavy machinery... the world of commercial aviation is home to every kind of workplace hazard known to man.

Chemicals? Explosives? Tight spaces? Airline workers wouldn't even flinch. Airline workers are trained to deal with all that by their first day. Heavy lifting? Heights? Complicated math? Please. Some ramper somewhere is probably loading a lion or a bear into a plane at this very moment.

However hard you try, occasionally coming home feeling a little beat up is normal. For airline workers, it's SOP. In fact, according to data compiled by OSHA, working at one of our nation's airports is about even with construction work when it comes to how likely it is to get banged up on the job.

Airline work is dangerous. And, the longer a person does it, the more likely a severe injury becomes.

It's hard to know just how dangerous airline work is, however. Surprisingly, there are no federal regulators or agencies that maintain a detailed and comprehensive record of injuries. What information exists can be nearly impossible to find, scattered over a confusing tangle of bureaucratic firewalls.

The most extensive database of airline incident tracking available is kept by Machinists Union members in Philadelphia. The small team of Safety Advocates there maintains careful records of injuries, equipment repairs, and other safety-related information of interest to airline workers. The detailed information provides what is perhaps the clearest view of the safety landscape of Airlines in North America.

According to the research conducted by the Machinists Union, the leading cause of injuries sustained by airline workers is... drumroll please... back injuries.

Hundreds and hundreds of airline workers report serious back injuries each year. Many of them are crippling.

They are also hard to avoid. Airline workers



**ANYTHING  
THAT CAN  
GOWRONG,  
WILL.**

*-One of Murphy's laws*

deal with several thousand pounds of bags a day, often while squeezed into the underbellies of planes. Other work areas require near-constant lifting from unavoidable awkward positions and heights. Moreover, back injuries seldom result from a single incident. Repetitive stress trauma can sneak up on you, waiting for that one special bag to become the straw that finally, well, breaks the camel's back.

All of which makes back injuries an unwanted trademark of airline work.

As ubiquitous as they are, however, accidents that lead to back injuries are not the only or necessarily the worst, safety risk at airports. UnionSafe141 also has a few other facts that they want you to know about.

**Check out the next page for more.**





## You Will Screw Up Your Back

**The most common injuries for airline workers are back injuries.**

**UnionSafe141.org** is home to the most extensive safety data collection available within commercial aviation. The site has recorded more than 900 significant back injuries suffered by airline workers.

Other injury risks may decrease with experience, but not when it comes to your back. The risk of a severe accident involving your back or spine can increase over time. Factors such as complacency and repetitive stress trauma make back injuries more likely the longer you stay at your job.



### ⬆ HOW TO DIE

**The most common way to die at an airport is to get hit by equipment.**

According to OSHA.gov, most of the people that have died working at airports did so after they were hit by vehicles or other ground equipment.

Since 2012, a surprising 75% of all OSHA reported airport fatalities involved vehicle strikes.

Source: OSHA.gov



### ⬆ HOW TO LOSE A LIMB

**Baggage carts caused the majority of reported amputations since 2012.**

Bag carts combine moving parts, motorized tugs, and heavy metal to create the perfect conditions for getting something on your body chopped off.

The most common body part lost to amputation at airports are fingers, and the most common way to lose a finger is while hooking up bag and freight carts.

Source: OSHA.gov



### ⬆ HOW TO GET MESSED UP

**After vehicle collisions, falls and trips cause the most serious injuries.**

25% of airport fatalities reported by OSHA since 2012 happened as the result of a fall. In addition, falls, trips and slips accounted for the largest number of non-fatal injuries if we don't count back and spine damage.

Falls easily create one of the largest causes of broken bones, brain damage, and permanent disabilities for airport workers.

Source: OSHA.gov



The IAM141  
Safety Conference  
**December 4th – 6th**



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For more information, visit [IAM141.org](http://IAM141.org).