

I strongly believe that airline pilots should be allowed to be armed in the cockpit.

It should not be mandatory, but passengers have readily accepted the existence of armed passengers (air marshals, etc.), but know that these sources of protection cannot be counted on to be there on their particular flight. I am an airline pilot.

I am also ex-military (AF) and qualified "expert" in both the .38 cal and M-16 rifle. Get rid of the darn security bar across the cockpit door! It is a pain in the a\_\_ and in case of an accident where evacuation of the aircraft on the ground is necessary, may trap the pilots in the cockpit and be deadly! Give cockpit keys ONLY to pilots and maintenance personnel. Flight attendants do not need, nor should they have, access to the cockpit without pilot approval. All modern aircraft have electronic means to open the door from inside. As for training, every local law enforcement agency (police department) has a weapons qual program. The taxpayer doesn't need to foot the bill for this program. I would be happy to pay for my own annual qual training with my local police or sheriff's dept. and upon completion, make a computer entry into my airline's data base and/or the FAA's database. Entries should be as simple as the name of the law enforcement agency with whom training was completed, range supervisor's name and phone number (for training verification), and completion date. Pilots who carried the mail for many years were mandated to carry firearms, and at least on one occasion that I'm aware of, were instrumental in foiling a hijacking attempt, resulting in the death of the armed perpetrator. The rules of engagement all changed on Sept 11th, 2001. The traveling public will embrace this security measure. Give them back their pocket knives and toenail clippers and give the cockpit a strong deterrent to would-be terrorists! If a pilot fails to go through the approved training and is caught with a weapon, take away his pilot license for a period of time. If he fails to show the proper credentials to an FAA Inspector upon request, make the pilot subject to the same fine/enforcement action that now exists for other flight credentials not being current. This is a simple fix. Don't make it harder or more expensive than it needs to be. Just do it. Thanks!