



INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE REFERENCE GUIDE

AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INT'L • www.alpa.org

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1. Introduction

This language guide was developed by the ALPA President's Committee for Diversity and Inclusion (PCDI) to be used as a resource for ALPA pilots, leaders, and staff. Inclusive language in communications is essential to our union's solidarity and collective strength and is an important factor in maintaining flight safety.

Please refer to the Glossary of Terms, also posted on the PCDI website, for additional information and definitions of words used in this guide.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this language guide is to offer examples of terms and phrases that promote inclusion and equity. It can be referenced for written or verbal communications and useful before addressing internal and external audiences.

3. Procedural Guidance

The PCDI offers the following guidance on terms that may be used to promote an inclusive work environment.

3.1 Use of Pronouns and Singular They/Their/Them

Just as a person might prefer to be called by a name other than what is on their birth certificate, a person may also desire to be referred to by another gender pronoun.¹ A person may use the “they/their/them” pronouns in the singular form when referring to themselves. While this may seem unfamiliar at first, it is commonly used by people who identify as nonbinary.

To foster a more inclusive environment, be thoughtful of the pronouns that others use. To achieve this, if an individual tells you that they prefer certain pronouns, please honor their request to the best of your abilities.

Example: *My name is Casey Smith, and I use the pronouns they, their, and them.*

Example: *Our next speaker is Capt. Jean Smith. They are from Council 16.*

3.2 Generalizations and Stereotypes

Generalizations and stereotypes often do not reflect the majority of a population. Their use can be degrading and marginalizing. This can interfere with someone’s ability to effectively conduct their work duties as a crewmember in our industry.

¹ The Human Rights Campaign; Professional Resources; “Talking About Pronouns in the Workplace”
www.thehrcfoundation.org/professional-resources/talking-about-pronouns-in-the-workplace

The following are some inclusive-language recommendations that can help prevent the negative consequences of using generalizations and stereotypes.

INSTEAD OF USING	WHY	TRY USING	EXAMPLE
<p>Note: The use of descriptors can result in negative or positive outcomes based on the intent of the user. When used negatively to perpetuate a stereotype, these descriptors can be insulting, hurtful, and isolating. When used to identify a person or group of people respectfully, descriptors can be positive.</p>			
<p>“This Black guy I just flew with doesn’t know the airplane well.”</p> <p>“I flew a three- day trip with this woman who is a terrible stick.”</p> <p>“I just flew with him; did you know he is gay?”</p> <p>“I flew with a Mexican pilot who had a terrible accent when speaking to ATC.”</p>	<p>It is discriminatory and exclusionary to use a descriptor with the intent to imply that a pilot does not belong in the profession or is less qualified because of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, etc.</p>	<p>“Pilot”</p>	<p>“I flew with a pilot who . . .”</p> <p>“The female pilots at ALPA have been doing great outreach work for Women in Aviation Month.”</p> <p>“I got to fly with this amazing Hispanic pilot who is from Chile.”</p> <p>“I flew with Cheryl who is transgender and does incredible advocacy work on behalf of other ALPA pilots.”</p>
<p>“Ladies and Gentlemen”</p> <p>“Brothers and Sisters” (when addressing internal and external audiences)</p>	<p>These terms may inadvertently exclude individuals who do not identify as male or female.</p>	<p>“Members”</p> <p>“ALPA pilots”</p> <p>“Guests”</p> <p>“Everyone”</p>	<p>“Good morning, members, and welcome to ALPA’s headquarters.”</p> <p>“ALPA pilots, welcome to our annual AirSafety Forum.”</p> <p>“Good afternoon everyone, are we ready to get started?”</p>
<p>“Girls in the back” (when referring to flight attendants)</p>	<p>This phrase devalues women in the profession.</p>	<p>“Flight attendant”</p> <p>“Cabin crew”</p> <p>“Inflight crewmembers”</p>	<p>“On today’s flight, we will be working with four flight attendants.”</p>

In many cases, the following terms are common and acceptable. In instances when you do not know a person’s family dynamic, personal preference, or if you want to ensure complete inclusivity in your words, the following alternatives could be used.

INSTEAD OF USING	WHY	TRY USING	EXAMPLE
“Mother/Father”	This may inadvertently ignore different family structures, such as grandparents as caregivers, same-sex parents, stepparents, families with adopted members, and more.	“Parent(s)” “Guardian(s)” “Family”	As written in numerous ALPA contracts: <i>“Immediate family members for this section include parents, spouse, grandparents, stepparents, etc. . .”</i>
“Husband/Wife” “Boyfriend/ Girlfriend”	These terms may leave out individuals who are unmarried or have a long-term or same-sex partner.	If you are unsure of a person’s relationship status, use: “Spouse/Partner” “Significant other”	“All pilots are encouraged to invite their spouse, partner, or significant other to our annual award ceremony . . .”
“Miss” “Mrs.” Many people find these terms common and acceptable. ALPA uses a pilot’s professional title (captain, first officer). This avoids incorrect assumptions.	These titles identify women by their marital status and age. Incorrect use can result in an uncomfortable situation.	“Captain” “First Officer” “Ms.” (pronounced miz) “Mx.” (pronounced mix)	“Dear Ms. Johnson,” “Our guest speaker today is First Officer Mary Johnson.” “ Captain , would you like the ATIS?”

3.3 Masculine Generalizations

Historically, masculine generalizations have been used as default terms to represent all genders within a group. However, studies have shown that even with a disclaimer that the word “he” includes women, the pronoun is overwhelmingly interpreted as representing only men.² This does not properly represent women, transgender people, and people of different gender identities. Masculine generalizations should be avoided to ensure inclusivity in oral and written communications to a group of people.

INSTEAD OF USING	WHY	TRY USING	EXAMPLE
“He” (as a stand-alone) “Him” “Himself”	Using “he” as a generic description of a whole group in written communications, such as ALPA-negotiated pilot contracts, may leave women, transgender people, and people with different gender identities feel like they don’t belong in the pilot profession.	Singular: “They/Them/Their” A general descriptor instead of any pronoun: “The person” “The pilot”	“The pronouns ‘they, their, and them’ used herein shall include all pilots.” “If a lineholder is subject to Section 17-A because they lost a trip and they pick up a new assignment whose pay exceeds the pay value of the assignment that was lost, their minimum pay guarantee shall increase by the difference of such pay value.”
“Guys” when referring to groups	Although “guys” has been used as an expression when addressing a group of people for many years, some individuals may feel left out, especially in a setting that includes women, transgender people, and people with different gender identities.	“All” “Everyone/Everybody” “Pilots” “Members”	“Are you all going to dinner after the meeting tonight?” “Ok everyone , let’s get started.”

²U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institute of Health; Author Manuscripts: “What’s in a pronoun? Why gender-fair language matters” www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5774006/

INSTEAD OF USING	WHY	TRY USING	EXAMPLE
<p>“Cockpit”</p>	<p>While the word “cockpit” dates back to the 1900s, it has been and may be used in a derogatory way to exclude women in the piloting profession.</p> <p>Many women have heard a variation of “It is called a cockpit for a reason” by a male pilot, suggesting that women do not belong in the piloting profession. The intent behind the use of the word is important.</p> <p>Note: While airplane manufactures, company-specific publications, and manuals may contain the word “cockpit,” the trend in the aviation industry is to replace it with “flight deck.” Acronyms, such as CVR and CASS, appropriately reference the word “cockpit.”</p> <p>When addressing groups of people, whether through oral or written communications, please consider using “flight deck” to create a more inclusive environment.</p>	<p>“Flight Deck”</p>	<p>“Good afternoon from the flight deck.”</p>
<p>“Fraternally”</p>	<p>While at one time our union was exclusively male, our ranks now include women, transgender people, and members with different gender identities.</p>	<p>“In Unity” “In Solidarity” “Sincerely” “With warm regards”</p>	<p>“In Solidarity, John Smith”</p>

3.4 -Man/-Men Compound Words

-Man/-men compounded words were created in a time when a majority of working people were male. As society continues to evolve, our language will naturally expand to reflect the diversity we have at ALPA to create a more inclusive workplace.

INSTEAD OF USING	TRY	EXAMPLE
Chairman/ Vice Chairman	Chair/Vice Chair Chairperson/Vice Chairperson	“Who is the chair of the Membership Committee?”
Manpower	Staff Workforce Employees Volunteers Human Power People Power	“ALPA’s Education Committee has many volunteers .” “Who will provide the people/human power to support this event?” “ALPA’s staff is knowledgeable in the various areas that support pilot programs and initiatives.”
Congressman	Member of Congress Congressperson Congressional Representative Legislator	“I spoke with a Member of Congress .” “Send a letter to your congressional representative . . .”
Businessman	Businessperson CEO Executive Entrepreneur Business Professional	“He is a businessperson at a Fortune 500 company.” “They are an executive at . . .”
Airman/Airmen	Pilot	“Every six months, a captain shall receive a line check from a check pilot ”

This is a working document and as such is under continuous review.

Please send suggestions and comments to Diversity@alpa.org.