

**CHAPTER 2—AIRCRAFT AND MOTOR  
VEHICLES**

Sec.	
31.	Definitions.
32.	Destruction of aircraft or aircraft facilities.
33.	Destruction of motor vehicles or motor vehicle facilities.
34.	Penalty when death results.
35.	Fraud involving or conveying false information.
36.	Drive-by shooting.
37.	Violence at international airports.
38.	Fraud involving aircraft or space vehicle parts in interstate or foreign commerce.
39.	Traffic signal preemption transmitters.
39A.	Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft <sup>1</sup>
40.	Commercial motor vehicles required to stop for inspections.

AMENDMENTS

2012—Pub. L. 112-95, title III, §311(b), Feb. 14, 2012, 126 Stat. 66, transferred item 39 to appear after item 38 and added item 39A.

2008—Pub. L. 110-244, title III, §301(j), June 6, 2008, 122 Stat. 1616, redesignated item 39 “Commercial motor vehicles required to stop for inspections” as item 40.

2005—Pub. L. 109-59, title II, §2018(b), title IV, §4143(c)(1), Aug. 10, 2005, 119 Stat. 1543, 1748, added item 39 “Commercial motor vehicles required to stop for inspections” and item 39 “Traffic signal preemption transmitters”.

2000—Pub. L. 106-181, title V, §506(c)(2)(A), Apr. 5, 2000, 114 Stat. 139, added item 38.

1994—Pub. L. 103-322, title VI, §§60008(c), 60021(b), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 1972, 1980, added items 36 and 37.

**§ 31. Definitions**

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this chapter, the following definitions apply:

(1) **AIRCRAFT.**—The term “aircraft” means a civil, military, or public contrivance invented, used, or designed to navigate, fly, or travel in the air.

(2) **AVIATION QUALITY.**—The term “aviation quality”, with respect to a part of an aircraft or space vehicle, means the quality of having been manufactured, constructed, produced, maintained, repaired, overhauled, rebuilt, reconditioned, or restored in conformity with applicable standards specified by law (including applicable regulations).

(3) **DESTRUCTIVE SUBSTANCE.**—The term “destructive substance” means an explosive substance, flammable material, infernal machine, or other chemical, mechanical, or radioactive device or matter of a combustible, contaminative, corrosive, or explosive nature.

(4) **IN FLIGHT.**—The term “in flight” means—

(A) any time from the moment at which all the external doors of an aircraft are closed following embarkation until the moment when any such door is opened for disembarkation; and

(B) in the case of a forced landing, until competent authorities take over the responsibility for the aircraft and the persons and property on board.

(5) **IN SERVICE.**—The term “in service” means—

(A) any time from the beginning of pre-flight preparation of an aircraft by ground personnel or by the crew for a specific flight until 24 hours after any landing; and

(B) in any event includes the entire period during which the aircraft is in flight.

(6) **MOTOR VEHICLE.**—The term “motor vehicle” means every description of carriage or other contrivance propelled or drawn by mechanical power and used for commercial purposes on the highways in the transportation of passengers, passengers and property, or property or cargo.

(7) **PART.**—The term “part” means a frame, assembly, component, appliance, engine, propeller, material, part, spare part, piece, section, or related integral or auxiliary equipment.

(8) **SPACE VEHICLE.**—The term “space vehicle” means a man-made device, either manned or unmanned, designed for operation beyond the Earth’s atmosphere.

(9) **STATE.**—The term “State” means a State of the United States, the District of Columbia, and any commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States.

(10) **USED FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES.**—The term “used for commercial purposes” means the carriage of persons or property for any fare, fee, rate, charge or other consideration, or directly or indirectly in connection with any business, or other undertaking intended for profit.

(b) **TERMS DEFINED IN OTHER LAW.**—In this chapter, the terms “aircraft engine”, “air navigation facility”, “appliance”, “civil aircraft”, “foreign air commerce”, “interstate air commerce”, “landing area”, “overseas air commerce”, “propeller”, “spare part”, and “special aircraft jurisdiction of the United States” have the meanings given those terms in sections 40102(a) and 46501 of title 49.

(Added July 14, 1956, ch. 595, §1, 70 Stat. 538; amended Pub. L. 98-473, title II, §§1010, 2013(a), Oct. 12, 1984, 98 Stat. 2141, 2187; Pub. L. 100-690, title VII, §7015, Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4395; Pub. L. 103-272, §5(e)(1), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 1373; Pub. L. 106-181, title V, §506(b), Apr. 5, 2000, 114 Stat. 136.)

AMENDMENTS

2000—Pub. L. 106-181 added subsecs. (a) and (b) and struck out former text which read as follows: “When used in this chapter the term—

“‘Aircraft engine’, ‘air navigation facility’, ‘appliance’, ‘civil aircraft’, ‘foreign air commerce’, ‘interstate air commerce’, ‘landing area’, ‘overseas air commerce’, ‘propeller’, ‘spare part’ and ‘special aircraft jurisdiction of the United States’ shall have the meaning ascribed to those terms in sections 40102(a) and 46501 of title 49.

“‘Motor vehicle’ means every description of carriage or other contrivance propelled or drawn by mechanical power and used for commercial purposes on the highways in the transportation of passengers, passengers and property, or property or cargo;

“‘Destructive substance’ means any explosive substance, flammable material, infernal machine, or other chemical, mechanical, or radioactive device or matter of a combustible, contaminative, corrosive, or explosive nature;

“‘Used for commercial purposes’ means the carriage of persons or property for any fare, fee, rate, charge or other consideration, or directly or indirectly in connection with any business, or other undertaking intended for profit;

<sup>1</sup> So in original. Probably should be followed by a period.

“‘In flight’ means any time from the moment all the external doors of an aircraft are closed following embarkation until the moment when any such door is opened for disembarkation. In the case of a forced landing the flight shall be deemed to continue until competent authorities take over the responsibility for the aircraft and the persons and property on board; and

“‘In service’ means any time from the beginning of preflight preparation of the aircraft by ground personnel or by the crew for a specific flight until twenty-four hours after any landing; the period of service shall, in any event, extend for the entire period during which the aircraft is in flight.”

1994—Pub. L. 103-272 substituted “sections 40102(a) and 46501 of title 49” for “the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, as amended” in par. beginning with definition of “Aircraft engine”.

1988—Pub. L. 100-690 substituted “door is opened” for “door in opened” in definition of “in flight”.

1984—Pub. L. 98-473, §2013(a)(1), in first par. struck out “and” before “spare part”, inserted “and ‘special aircraft jurisdiction of the United States’”, and substituted “Federal Aviation Act of 1958” for “Civil Aeronautics Act of 1938”.

Pub. L. 98-473, §1010, substituted “passengers and property, or property or cargo” for “or passengers and property” in definition of motor vehicle.

Pub. L. 98-473, §2013(a)(2)-(4), inserted definitions of “in flight” and “in service”.

#### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2000 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 106-181 applicable only to fiscal years beginning after Sept. 30, 1999, see section 3 of Pub. L. 106-181, set out as a note under section 106 of Title 49, Transportation.

#### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1984 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 98-473, title II, §2015, Oct. 12, 1984, 98 Stat. 2190, provided that: “This part [part B (§§2011-2015) of chapter XX of title II of Pub. L. 98-473, see Short Title of 1984 Amendment note below] shall become effective on the date of the enactment of this joint resolution [Oct. 12, 1984].”

#### SHORT TITLE OF 2000 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 106-181, title V, §506(a), Apr. 5, 2000, 114 Stat. 136, provided that: “This section [enacting section 38 of this title and amending this section and section 2516 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Aircraft Safety Act of 2000’.”

#### SHORT TITLE OF 1984 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 98-473, title II, §2011, Oct. 12, 1984, 98 Stat. 2187, provided that: “This part [part B (§§2011-2015) of chapter XX of title II of Pub. L. 98-473, amending this section, section 32 of this title, and sections 1301, 1471, and 1472 of former Title 49, Transportation, and enacting provisions set out as notes under this section] may be cited as the ‘Aircraft Sabotage Act’.”

#### STATEMENT OF FINDINGS AND PURPOSE FOR 1984 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 98-473, title II, §2012, Oct. 12, 1984, 98 Stat. 2187, provided that: “The Congress hereby finds that—

“(1) the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation (ratified by the United States on November 1, 1972) requires each contracting State to establish its jurisdiction over certain offenses affecting the safety of civil aviation;

“(2) such offenses place innocent lives in jeopardy, endanger national security, affect domestic tranquility, gravely affect interstate and foreign commerce, and are offenses against the law of nations; and

“(3) the purpose of this subtitle [probably means part B (§§2011-2015) of chapter XX of title II of Pub. L. 98-473, see Short Title of 1984 Amendment note above] is to implement fully the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of

Civil Aviation and to expand the protection accorded to aircraft and related facilities.”

### § 32. Destruction of aircraft or aircraft facilities

(a) Whoever willfully—

(1) sets fire to, damages, destroys, disables, or wrecks any aircraft in the special aircraft jurisdiction of the United States or any civil aircraft used, operated, or employed in interstate, overseas, or foreign air commerce;

(2) places or causes to be placed a destructive device or substance in, upon, or in proximity to, or otherwise makes or causes to be made unworkable or unusable or hazardous to work or use, any such aircraft, or any part or other materials used or intended to be used in connection with the operation of such aircraft, if such placing or causing to be placed or such making or causing to be made is likely to endanger the safety of any such aircraft;

(3) sets fire to, damages, destroys, or disables any air navigation facility, or interferes by force or violence with the operation of such facility, if such fire, damaging, destroying, disabling, or interfering is likely to endanger the safety of any such aircraft in flight;

(4) with the intent to damage, destroy, or disable any such aircraft, sets fire to, damages, destroys, or disables or places a destructive device or substance in, upon, or in proximity to, any appliance or structure, ramp, landing area, property, machine, or apparatus, or any facility or other material used, or intended to be used, in connection with the operation, maintenance, loading, unloading or storage of any such aircraft or any cargo carried or intended to be carried on any such aircraft;

(5) interferes with or disables, with intent to endanger the safety of any person or with a reckless disregard for the safety of human life, anyone engaged in the authorized operation of such aircraft or any air navigation facility aiding in the navigation of any such aircraft;

(6) performs an act of violence against or incapacitates any individual on any such aircraft, if such act of violence or incapacitation is likely to endanger the safety of such aircraft;

(7) communicates information, knowing the information to be false and under circumstances in which such information may reasonably be believed, thereby endangering the safety of any such aircraft in flight; or

(8) attempts or conspires to do anything prohibited under paragraphs (1) through (7) of this subsection;

shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than twenty years or both.

(b) Whoever willfully—

(1) performs an act of violence against any individual on board any civil aircraft registered in a country other than the United States while such aircraft is in flight, if such act is likely to endanger the safety of that aircraft;

(2) destroys a civil aircraft registered in a country other than the United States while such aircraft is in service or causes damage to such an aircraft which renders that aircraft