

## ***Using Actual Weights for Cargo and Personnel on DOD Charter Flights***

On a DOD charter flight, a regularly used charter carrier accepted estimated personnel bag weights for cargo stored in the belly of the aircraft. Had our DOD operations evaluator not been there, the flight would have departed with two parties breaking Federal law (the military unit and the carrier) and the lives of the troops and crew put unnecessarily at risk. Additionally, before takeoff our evaluator discovered that the transported unit arrived with estimated average male and female weights and planned to use those for the flight. After an explanation of the law to both the carrier air crew and the troop commander, the entire aircraft had to be downloaded and all cargo and personnel weighed before reloading and a late departure. There has been no change in this requirement for over 20 years, but recent experience demonstrates a need for continued reemphasis.

32 CFR 861.1(a) (3) (ix) states “actual passenger and cargo weights are used in computing aircraft weight and balance.” This is Federal law and on par with any FAA regulations that crews and passengers are required to obey. Additionally, this law is written into all DOD carrier contract language. There are many ways to get actual weights but no exceptions, actual weights must be used for both personnel and all cargo.

If military units show up without actual weights, carriers are authorized to delay departure as necessary in order to obtain actual weights or depart empty. Actual weights must be used for all DOD charter flights regardless of the size of troop movement or aircraft used.

Passenger weight will include all carry-on baggage weight. If scales are not available, interrogated weights of individuals shall be used in conjunction with additives for boots, guns, etc as defined in your contract with the DOD. For mixed loads of military members and their dependents (such as on channel missions), if scales are not available, interrogated body weights may be used to determine accurate weights.