

FAA administrator on leave after Virginia DWI charge - CNN.com

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Police arrested Randy Babbitt, 65, Saturday, for allegedly driving while intoxicated.

Washington (CNN) -- The head of the Federal Aviation Administration will take a leave of absence after his arrest on a charge of driving while intoxicated, officials said Monday.

Police in Fairfax, Virginia, arrested Randy Babbitt, 65, Saturday night after spotting the car he was allegedly driving traveling on the wrong side of the road, the department said in a news release.

Babbitt, who was alone in the car, cooperated with the arrest and was released on his own recognizance after a magistrate issued a warrant, according to Fairfax police.

Officials of the Department of Transportation, which includes the FAA, learned of the arrest on Monday and were "in discussions with legal counsel about Administrator Babbitt's employment status," the department said in a statement.

"Administrator Babbitt has requested, effective immediately, to take a leave of absence from the FAA. That request has been granted," the statement said.

Sasha Johnson, a spokeswoman for the Department of Transportation, declined comment. The FAA had no immediate comment.

White House spokesman Jay Carney said President Barack Obama learned of the arrest Monday afternoon along with the rest of the administration. He declined to say if the president will ask for Babbitt's resignation.

Babbitt is a veteran pilot who flew for Eastern Airlines for 25 years, according to his official FAA biography. He became the agency's administrator in 2009.

Deputy Administrator Michael Huerta will serve as the agency's acting administrator, the Department of Transportation said.

A veteran transportation official and former managing director of the 2002 Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, Huerta was confirmed to his post as the FAA's deputy administrator in June 2010.

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