CHIRP FEEDBACK

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EDITORIAL

Never start with an apology - except just this once. I am sorry there were no reports submitted by engineers or ATCOs in the last edition of FEEDBACK. The truth is that there were no reports ready for publication and it would have been sensible of me to tell you that in the editorial. Thank you to those of you who have contacted me about it and let me reassure you that we welcome reports from every discipline of the industry and will do our best with any issue brought to our attention.

Part of the CHIRP process is to present disidentified reports to the relevant Advisory Board for their consideration. The Air Transport Advisory Board (ATAB) meet 4 times each year and comprises of up to 30 experienced and current pilots, engineers, ATCOs and specialist advisors from across industry and regulators. Some members are nominated by their employer, some by professional bodies and some are independent. However, they sit on the Board as expert individuals rather than representing the interest of any sponsor. Their views, advice and judgment guide the activities of the CHIRP staff and provide the comments that appear after each report in FEEDBACK. Although not everyone always agrees with their comments, you would need to go a long way to find a panel of experts with greater breadth or depth of experience. For more details of the ATAB membership see our website at www.chirp.co.uk

I am delighted to announce that we have appointed a new CHIRP Deputy Director (Engineering), Bruce Hunter, who has an extensive career in airline engineering. Bruce will ensure that engineering reports are investigated thoroughly and will also run the CHIRP MEMS Programme. In the light of a number of questions from engineers, I would also like to reiterate that there is no intention that CHIRP MEMS should become the route for individuals to submit engineering reports; CHIRP MEMS is the vehicle for engineering organisations to share incident and investigation data and it is separate from the normal CHIRP reporting process for engineers, ATCOs, flight crew and cabin crew.

Ian Dugmore

Having recently been appointed to the position of Deputy Director (Engineering) CHIRP, let me thank my predecessor Mick Skinner for all his hard work in the interest of safety and on behalf of the wider aircraft maintenance community.

Taking on this new role my initial task is to ensure that engineering staff are represented both within CHIRP and across the wider community. The industry faces an interesting time while engineering faces challenges we have not seen for some time. The introduction of new aircraft types with associated technology interfaces should not be underestimated. Similarly, after a long period of staff reductions, many organisations are taking on new staff. This change is designed to compensate for an ageing demography, given the timescales involved it is vital this need is addressed now.

Like most of the engineering readership I started my career as an engineering apprentice. Fortunately like many of you I was shown respect, given advice, help and support. I would ask you all to think about what you can give back to our next generation of engineers much in the spirit that we were given during our formative years. Safety does not happen by default it takes vigilance and focus to ensure we do not compromise. Finally I look forward to hearing from you and dealing with your queries.

Bruce Hunter

ENGINEERING REPORTS

MEL IN INCORRECT LANGUAGE CHECKS

Report Text: I am writing with a serious concern regarding AAA Airlines and their documentation. They fly into [the UK] regularly and are maintained by BBB. Their Minimum Equipment List (MEL) is in another language, and the small English section at the back has 'FOR REFERENCE ONLY' on every page, rendering it almost useless to an English speaking certifier. Is this legal under CAA/EASA regulations? BBB staff have pressure applied to them to sign the CRS on AAA aircraft even though they have no MEL to work with. This is a very serious issue, as staff in the UK have no way of raising ADDs IAW MEL or to review existing ones.

This issue has been raised several times with both Quality Departments and they have both basically just ignored the issue and expect us to carry on certifying blindly without the documentation we need to do our job safely. There is also the issue of AAA crews regularly writing up defects in another language which also causes issues as I'm sure you can imagine. Unfortunately I feel it's just a matter of time before there is an incident where somebody raises a deferral incorrectly due to the language barrier.

I sincerely hope somebody at the CAA will investigate this and have the airline provide us with the documentation we require to do our jobs in a safe and legal manner.

CHIRP Comment: It is the responsibility of the operator to ensure that support arrangements are adequate to assure the safe and correct release of the aircraft irrespective of the location for performance of the task. In addition maintenance organisations have a responsibility to provide appropriate documentation to support maintenance personnel. Part of the contract process should specify such requirements and all reasonable steps should be taken to ensure these

requirements are met. In this instance, while both the operator and the maintenance organisation recognise the need to provide an MEL in the correct language, delays have resulted in stress for the individuals involved. With the reporter's agreement, the CAA has been made aware.

POOR HANGAR MANAGEMENT

Following a significant management change at a UK based maintenance organization the reporter identified the following issues which were reported through CHIRP and also to the CAA (SARG).

Report Text: I am sending this to bring to your attention very poor and possibly dangerous practices by CCC engineering. They are carrying out maintenance, including extensive modifications and an engine change on an aircraft type on which they have no base maintenance staff who hold licence and approval.

Certification is being carried out by two line maintenance engineers (one B1 and one B2) who have very limited experience on this aircraft type consisting entirely of occasional transit checks. Neither of these engineers have recent (if any) base maintenance experience and, in any case, they have not been present for most of the maintenance activities due to their line maintenance duties and certifying an aircraft being spray painted in a different hangar.

There is also a contractor who is carrying out seat rail replacements. As the work is being carried out day and night, it is difficult to see how it can be properly supervised. I am sending this confidentially due to the bullying atmosphere that pervades in CCC engineering. This is also the reason that the engineers are prepared to compromise their integrity in this way.

CHIRP Comment: **Following the allegation, the organisation undertook an internal review of the issues raised in the report. The internal investigation was followed up by the CAA who confirmed that the correct maintenance practices were being adhered to. Specifically the contractors were working on behalf of the OEM to a works order with only the final CRS being cleared by the line maintenance engineers. Both the organisation and the CAA identified that improved staff briefing on what was happening and how the check was being managed may have alleviated the concerns shown by the reporter.**

ATC REPORTS

CONTINUOUS DESCENT ARRIVALS AND SPEED CONTROL

Report Text: I write as an Area Control ATCO working the AAA/BBB sectors. For some time, even before Mode S was fitted, I've had my suspicions about speed control being ignored.

We have a huge volume of traffic into [a London airport] that mixes with a whole host of other traffic within the sector, so it is very important on many days that aircraft are streamed on a single track. In good time, these aircraft are speed controlled with MACH and IAS; an expected level may or may not be given for the start of the STAR but should show on a/c arrival plates or FMS. All too often the plan goes wrong, Mode S and ground speed interrogation shows significant differences of sometimes 80+ knots where aircraft are tightly spaced already. This involves significant workload, level-offs, headings, re coordination etc. and can be the tipping point towards overloads.

ATC know that pilots can choose to transition when they like but we are trained that this typically occurs fairly close to FL280; there is not the time to stipulate a level at which conversion to IAS should occur but it becomes clear some a/c have hung onto their Mach number down as low as FL200 or are simply ignoring the speed element of the ATC instruction.

DDD [UK airline] is based at [the subject airport] but they appear to be by far the worst culprit; American and Canadian carriers fly the speed to the knot!! If there is time to challenge pilots in a professional manner then the response is typically 'just slowing down now' or 'we sped up to make the level restriction'; neither of those works for me as I know my speed was issued well before top of descent and they should be aware of any normal descent profile points.

I probably should file CA4114 reports on these incidents but instead approached our airline liaison contact to make the point quietly; he was very interested as he knows of other incidents in another region of the country also involving airline DDD.

A slightly different point but on a similar theme is weather avoidance. This time UK flight crew are excellent and it is our North American colleagues who are at fault. They request a heading for weather which is agreed with a response such as 'radar heading, report clear of weather' this we use for separation from other a/c and danger areas etc. All too often we witness a change of heading is followed by request from a/c - the wrong way round!! I have been forced to level a/c immediately, no time for actual flight levels to avoid losses of separation. Again when challenged it seems lost on the crews as to what went wrong; they seem to believe they are allowed to navigate as they wish. Whether or not the heading is for weather it should be followed until cleared otherwise.

Hope that adds an interesting angle and shows the problem is not restricted to final approach as your previous article seemed to suggest.

CHIRP Comment: **The reporter cites one operator in particular but the problem of pilots not complying with ATC speed instructions is widespread; it is more than one operator and it occurs throughout controlled airspace and at all stages of flight. Although there are imperatives in the descent to manage aircraft energy and minimise fuel-burn, it would be impossible for ATC to manage a variety of descent profiles for different aircraft types and operators. Pilots should follow ATC instructions unless cleared for something different.**

FLIGHT CREW REPORTS

AIRPORT SECURITY CHECKS

Report Text: While positioning back to [base] as a passenger in my uniform consisting of flying suit, hat and

boots (a company requirement), I checked in and went to security.

After emptying all my pockets and removing my security pass, headset, hat and navigation bag, I was then told to remove my flying suit and boots, so they could be passed through the scanner. I informed them that I was only wearing thermal underwear underneath, but they insisted that I had to remove the flying suit. Knowing that the plane was waiting for me, I complied, only to be met by amusement and sniggering by all of the six security staff at my thermal underwear, and a comment by one of the three female members of staff who said "that looks cosy". By this stage I felt not only intimidated, but publicly humiliated as where I was forced to undress was in full view of the public in the terminal. I felt that the staff had gone far beyond the requirement for appropriate security checks and were doing this for their own amusement.

After having a straw poll of other pilots (colleagues), I discovered that most of them have suffered this form of humiliation and it appears to be getting worse at this airport.

CHIRP *Comment*: **It is unreasonable for flight crews to be asked to remove standard cotton/nomex flying coveralls in a public area. However, crews are sometimes required to fly positioning flights dressed in sea survival clothing. If you are required to travel in a bulky survival suit, security staff may require you to remove it and it is wise to wear something appropriate underneath to preserve your modesty. Following discussions with the operator, the subject airport management have provided a room for flight crews to remove survival clothing for searches or to change clothes for onward travel.**

Flight Deck Cleanliness

Report Text: My airline seems to pay no attention to cleaning the flight deck. In recent years the standard of cleanliness has dropped significantly. An approach has been made to the company but they do not seem willing to resolve the issue. Conditions have deteriorated to such a level that pilots have resorted to cleaning the flight deck area themselves. There are quite staggering levels of dermis, dust, foodstuff, hair and other items that build up over time. This appears never to be cleaned as the cleaners are not permitted to clean panels or centre consoles. There are regular build-ups of dust around vents and window edges that eventually manifests itself into mould patterns. I wonder what a test of the built-up bacteria would reveal. This really is no environment in which we should have to spend many hours.

It is obvious that work pressures have left cleaning teams and engineers no time to complete these vital tasks. What levels of sickness amongst the Flight Crew community could be attributed to this health risk? Even if it is also the responsibility of the Flight Crew to look after their aircraft how often should we have to clean black marks and grime off the switches and panels? I have pictures if needed.

Question: What standards are required by the operator to ensure pilot's health is not risked?

CHIRP Comment: **There are no regulated standards for flight deck cleanliness but there are good reasons for keeping them clean and tidy; these include the functionality of the controls and equipment, the health and safety of the flight crew and having a pleasant place to work in.**

Flight deck cleanliness is normally dealt with in two ways. First, engineering staff respond to works orders generated by the Approved Maintenance Programme to carry out periodic cleaning of flight deck panels; typically this is carried out as part of a planned maintenance programme. This type of cleaning is only carried out by approved engineers as it requires care to prevent spillages of cleaning materials in and around switches and instruments. Second, if in the course of normal operations the flight deck is perceived to be dirty, the flight crew should raise an entry in the aircraft Technical Log for action by a suitably approved engineer.

Apart from specialist cleaning as described, flight decks may be cleared of general debris on a daily basis when the cabin is cleaned by ground staff. This type of cleaning is for the removal of obviously discarded items and the operatives involved are instructed not to clean flight deck panels and consoles. Flight crew should keep flight decks as clean and tidy as possible and some operators provide flight crew with cleaning materials for use on areas and controls that do not require specialist attention. Flight crew should only use company-provided cleaning materials as per specific instructions.

It is unlikely that the conditions described by the reporter would lead to flight crew sickness. Although gastroenteritis is the most common cause of flight crew impairment, it is usually acquired from eating/drinking contaminated food or water. Good hygiene should always be practised by flight crew including eating finger food with cutlery/using a napkin to hold food if unable to wash hands prior to eating.

Local Knowledge

Report Text: Despite the generally exemplary service from air traffic control I have an issue with the information passed on the ATIS at FFF. Whereas at other airports there might be a message advising of parachuting "two miles north east of the airfield", at FFF the messages refer to local landmarks not on any aeronautical chart e.g. "paragliding at GGG".

I expect the locals know exactly what they mean but it must be nonsense to the majority of pilots, even some of those locally-based. It may be small beer, but if it is worth putting on the ATIS it is surely worth making it decipherable to all pilots.

CHIRP Comment: **Readers of FEEDBACK will be familiar with the problem of ATIS messages that are too long because they contain information that is not relevant, available elsewhere and/or out of date. It is perhaps inevitable that not all ATIS information will be relevant to every flight; for example information about the ILS will not be relevant to the pilot planning an overhead join and visual circuit. However, ATIS messages should be comprehensible to all pilots to allow them to decide on the relevance to their flight. Nominating local points of**

interest as VRPs would allow them to be published in the AIP and reproduced on relevant charts.

The ATC Manager at FFF comments that much of the traffic there is locally-based pilots conducting intensive short sector visual operations who are very familiar with local landmarks. These are easily identified and so located as to be easily associated with the usual visual approach and departure profiles flown, or used as a reference to point out traffic to other aircraft when trying to integrate flights. The use of local landmarks cuts down on the length of the ATIS messages at a time when these broadcasts are extended by notifications about on-going works. That said, there is little point broadcasting information that may not be understood by some of the intended recipients and an urgent review has been instigated to identify how to amend the procedures at FFF to follow best practice, with a view to incorporating it into the MATS Part 2.

LIMITED VISIBILITY OPERATIONS

Report Text: At the end of a night flight from JJJ to KKK [a UK airport] we were advised RVR had reduced to 1100m. We asked about LVOs and were told that the visibility was greater than 600m therefore not available. We again asked how long it would take to achieve this. The response was that the area was already protected but no LVOs due RVR. We saw the lights of the RW at about 12 miles but as we got closer it became IMC. Go-around was flown as nothing had been seen and was transferred back to Radar. "What were our intentions?" We replied that we would like radar vectors for a Cat2 Autoland. He replied saying RVR above limits so LVOs not available and would we like to climb to FL60 and take up the hold. We replied that we wished to maintain 3000 feet and proceed downwind, holding as necessary. At this point I took the radio and advised that I had no intention to divert just because the RVR had not met the criteria, having just made a missed approach and that I did not have all day i.e. fuel was getting low. Following an orbit downwind they finally agreed to implement LVOs and we carried out the Autoland getting visual reference at about 150 feet. Two other aircraft followed us in. The time was approximately 0345Z.

Lessons Learned: Firstly I have to say that we have the best controllers in the world. However there is a problem here and I have attempted to get to the bottom of it. It would appear that ATC have SOPs as we do and the criteria for LVOs are RVR 600m and cloud base 200 ft. Both are determined electronically with transmissometers and a cloud base device. Unfortunately fog does not always form over such devices! I understand that the issue is down to movement rates and everything slows down with LVOs. ATC fully accepts there may be go-arounds occasionally and "that is how it is". Pressure to keep the movement rate up comes from the Airport, Operators etc. The financial cost of a go-around or diversion is matched with the cost of fuel for the departures. (Something not quite right here). The incident had a flight safety issue in that I got really angry at the end of a night flight at 4am; not the easiest time for both pilots and controllers. The low fuel warning came on at 400 ft. during the Autoland! This being the time we should go to our alternate. We are based in KKK and expect to be able to land! Finally I have submitted this report here as I know no other way of getting the point across to both pilots and controllers. I had decided to carry the extra ton of fuel, and thank God I did. Maybe next time it will be 2 tons! Teamwork: together everyone achieves more!

CHIRP Comment: The use of Low Visibility Procedures (LVPs) minimises the overall impact on flight operations when the weather is poor. Whilst criteria for LVPs are agreed locally, the decision to commence LVPs on any particular occasion remains with ATC, who will take into account information from a variety of sources. If the criteria for LVPs is met, then the decision is easy. However, in deteriorating conditions or when; as in this case, the weather is off the airfield, the decision is not as straightforward. ATCOs have some discretion in such circumstances but it is a matter of judgement and balance of the occasionally conflicting requirements of different aircraft. On this occasion, whilst ATC had completed the preparations required for the implementation of LVPs, the two aircraft ahead of the reporter's flight landed successfully without LVPs. Once the reporting pilot had flown the go-around it was evident that although the weather on the airfield was such that LVPs were not mandated, the weather on the approach had deteriorated and LVPs would be required. Notwithstanding the preparations already made, there are actions and coordination requirements to transition from the prepared state to full LVPs. This was done while the aircraft was carrying out the orbit downwind.

Changes to the criteria for instituting LVPs should be requested through, and agreed by, the relevant operator/airport authority committee. In the event that a go-around is conducted and LVPs are subsequently put in place either at the instigation of ATC or following an individual request, it would be helpful for flight crews to be provided with an estimate of how long it will take for implementation.

PRE/POST FLIGHT TIME ALLOWANCE

Report Text: Recently my Company has moved to a new terminal at LLL. The allocated time given for pre-flight duties is 60 minutes. This is broken down as 15 minutes in the crew room gathering info and briefing; we are supposed to be at the aircraft ETD -35 minutes which leaves only 10 minutes. In this 10 minutes, the crew are to leave the crew room walk to security - go through security and walk to the stand (journey times vary from 10-15minutes). Clearly this does not work and crew are arriving late to the aircraft. They then face stress and time pressures to get the flight ready to board at ETD-25. If they are not ready for boarding at ETD-25, they face management inquisition. I know for sure that crew are missing checks (as they freely admit it) to meet this deadline and I feel that security is being compromised.

The move to this terminal has made a 60 minute pre-flight duty period inadequate and the company's response is that it can't be changed as the roster system will collapse. Furthermore the allocated post flight duties are also insufficient to close up the aircraft and return to the crew room and debrief. The time allocated to this is

30 minutes but regularly it takes 40 plus. Whilst I am aware that Captains are amending the off-duty time, the fatigue issue of delayed duties does seem to be overlooked.

Lessons Learned: The only lesson that I can draw upon is to tell my crew that we will go when we are ready and not to bow to company pressure. I know not all Captains take this approach as some flatly refuse to accept the delay code of late crew to aircraft.

CHIRP Comment: **CAP 799 'Requirements and Guidance Material for Operators', Chapter 12 requires operators to ensure reporting and post-flight duty times to be realistic under normal circumstances and adjusted, if necessary, following changes in circumstances at reporting locations. It is of course inescapable that even if the journey times from crew room to gate are the same whether walking or travelling by bus, walking does not provide flight crews the same opportunity to study route and destination information.**

The operator comments that it has introduced measures to reduce the time required in the crew room and it is conducting a trial that allows crews the flexibility to manage their pre-flight time appropriately. As the effects of these measures are assessed they also intend to conduct a review of the crew room set-up to determine the best configuration.

UNREQUESTED IDENTING

Report Text: There appears to be a growing trend among some pilots to automatically 'Ident' when checking in with radar units on departure. I have heard pilots say they do this because they know ATC will ask for it on the next transmission. Regrettably the situation is not being helped by some controllers who will respond with "Thanks for the ident," and in doing so almost encourage the practice.

It is my understanding that an ident should only be given on response to a request from ATC and any other ident given without request could potentially lead to misidentification of an aircraft. This practice should stop and ATC should ask crew not to do it when it happens.

CHIRP Comment: **An unrequested ident can have utility in attracting a controller's attention in, for example, a radio failure situation. However, when it is used to pre-empt the controller's request for an ident it doesn't help! Don't do it and don't encourage it.**

MILITARY METARS

I write to ask for the military to review their weather communication process. At present all military aerodromes publish a METAR at 50 minutes past the hour. All civilian aerodromes publish twice during the hour at 20 and 50 minutes past. On numerous occasions I have been frustrated at the lack of immediate weather information available from military aerodromes, leading to poor decision making on my part and inconvenience for passengers. 45 min old weather information is absolutely useless in modern aviation. I am advised by the RAF that RAF Met stations though manned 24/7 only update the METAR if it changes through a colour code band. On this occasion in transit to a private site on the coast, a nearby RAF station forecast low cloud SCT/BKN at 100-200'. A civilian airfield some 30 miles to the east was slightly better at SCT/BKN 400/600'. Both were forecasting the weather to improve greatly to VFR conditions. Before departure I checked the METAR for the military airfield and they were still giving overcast 100' (an IFR destination) whereas the civilian airfield had improved to SCT 800' BKN 1500 (a VFR destination). Due to performance limitations and JAR-Ops 3 IFR fuel requirements, sufficient reserves were required for an approach at the IFR military airfield with the civilian airfield as a VFR alternate. This prevented a departure from the requested site in a city centre and meant the passengers travelling to an airfield for departure (45 minutes). Once airborne, although the military airfield METAR had not changed, I could see the coast from 30 miles. They clearly hadn't updated the METAR. Every one hundred foot increase in cloud-base, every 500m increase in visibility has a major impact on fuel/performance decisions in helicopter flying. Trying to ascertain how to descend from IFR to private sites or from IFR to airfields to continue VFR beneath is a constant process in helicopter flying. To have all of this incredibly expensive Met information sat on by RAF stations and not published to the wider aviation community is a major flight safety hazard. There is no point having excellent information if you don't communicate it. On this occasion I planned for the worst case but I have plenty of experiences where the reverse has happened. This happens on almost a weekly basis.

Why can't METARs be published every 15 minutes by all aerodromes with the sophisticated recording equipment now available? This would allow pilots to make real time decisions as to how the forecast is progressing.

Suggestions to prevent re-occurrence: RAF to review Met communication procedures.

CHIRP Comment: **Issuing METARS every 15 minutes might have utility for some types of operation but would not be appropriate for others, particularly if it resulted in changes to the ATIS broadcast and Information Code.**

The MoD comments that it pays the Met Office for met services which meet Defence operational requirements in the UK.

The Met Office comments that RAF Met stations are not necessarily manned 24/7; stations are manned to meet operational requirements, which differ from station to station. In their report, the pilot noted that whilst the METAR was indicating one set of conditions this was contrary to what they saw from the aircraft. A METAR is Omni-directional information based on worse case. To critique accurately the observation in the METAR, conditions (visibility, cloud cover and height etc.) must be assessed all round; a worse set of conditions may have been observed in another direction.

The default METAR reporting time at military airfields, if conditions don't change, is hourly. However, the METAR is updated if a noticeable change in conditions occurs, including a change to the colour state.

It is worth noting that fewer METAR specials are produced from a civilian airfield than a military one. This is largely due to military airfields recognising and reporting when

scattered cloud (3-4 Oktas) occurs whilst the civilian equivalent does not react until it becomes broken cloud (5-7 Oktas). By operating this way (METARs hourly and when conditions change) the staff have the flexibility to react and respond.

REPORTING UNFIT FOR DUTY

Report Text: Many of the cabin crew and all at some bases have recently been threatened with the risk of redundancy. They are rightly concerned for their jobs and of course this is at the forefront of their minds. It is perceived that sickness will play a big part of the matrix that determines redundancy.

Cabin crew in particular are feeling pressured to turn up to work because of this threat. They turn up to work in a fragile, ill and infectious state, prone to get even worse or incapacitated. They pass their colds and flu on to other crew members who in turn will not call in sick. They are unfit to fly and they know it, but in their minds to keep their job they must turn up to work regardless.

On two separate occasions last week I had cabin crew report for duty unfit. One was bright red, could hardly speak, coughing repeatedly to the point of nausea, feverish and had a head ache. The other was aching all over, popping pills at the briefing table and breaking into cold sweats. They were adamant that they must turn up because they couldn't go sick and one even said "I'll get sacked if I go sick". They were almost certainly infectious and spending 9 hours at work with hundreds of passengers and the crew was bad for their health and ours. The implications for an incapacitation don't even bear thinking about.

The perception that sending someone home increases their probability of redundancy puts the Captain in an awkward position; some will, some wont. In winter time when coughs, colds and bugs are at the most prevalent, people will be ill, it's a fact of life. The honest crew members who call in sick will be the ones punished. If someone is perhaps less than honest with their sickness then this will have been picked up by the company's disciplinary procedure, thus negating the need to count sickness, only disciplinary events.

This is not restricted to cabin crew. I have seen pilots flying with blocked ears when their jobs are at risk and I hate to think what other ailments pilots are coming in to work with. I firmly believe this leads to an unsafe operation across the network and, in particular, bases where there is an element of competition as to who is made redundant. The company has handled this whole process appallingly. No lessons have been learnt from last time.

I know there is no easy way, but there has to be a way with more respect, fairness and dignity bestowed upon the very people who are the face of this airline, who are dedicated and have worked so hard, so selflessly, despite all adversity to do their best in support of the company.

CHIRP Comment: The report above is one of 2 recent reports about the use of sickness absence being used as a criterion in selection for redundancy.

The operator comments that 'The issue of the inclusion of sickness absence in any form of redundancy criteria will always be an item for robust discussion between employers, employees and their representatives; however, it should always be remembered that formulation of any selection criteria is conducted in consultation between employer and employee representatives. In this particular case the consultation has resulted in agreement between the parties that attendance will form part of the selection criteria and this is managed through the Company Attendance Management Policy, which includes absence through sickness.

Within both the pilot and cabin crew groups it has been agreed that absence will be taken into account when applying the selection criteria matrix, although the method of application is slightly different between the 2 groups. A common aspect of both processes is that any absence during the period of consultation over manpower reductions will not be included. Therefore, any occasions of absence considered will be in a period of normal operations unaffected by announcements of possible redundancies.

It is an Operations Manual requirement that crew members should not exercise the privileges of their licence, rating or certificate (including cabin crew attestation) when they are aware of any decrease in their medical fitness. It is, therefore, reasonable to expect that if a crew member is unfit, they should not operate and a Commander is obliged to offload any crew member whom he determines is unfit to operate. This will apply during all operations, regardless of the Company circumstances. The application of the selection criteria and inclusion of absence within these criteria has been agreed such that it is covering normal operations prior to the announcement of the Company proposals to reduce employee numbers.'

GENERAL AVIATION REPORTS

TEXTING WHILE INSTRUCTING

Report Text: After completing power checks at the hold for the runway, I noticed that my instructor was texting whilst I was running through the checklist, which I didn't really care about too much, because with 17 hours flying I am familiar with the checks and making sure that the engine is running correctly. The surface wind was a direct crosswind at 20 knots gusting around 25 to 30 knots. I lined up on the runway after making my R/T calls, and was ready for take-off. I noticed that my instructor was STILL texting on his phone or doing something on the internet. I tried to ignore it and just carried on with the normal take off and when I got airborne I followed the after departure checklist. At this point my instructor was still fiddling around with his phone. This made me feel as though the instructor was not at all interested and was showing no interest in what I was doing. Trying to ignore this I carried on flying the downwind leg, and turned base-leg for the runway. When I was on approach, the instructor was still texting on his mobile phone. I just simply said the instructor's name to which the instructor replied with "Yeah". The instructor then set me up nicely on the approach as I haven't flown in a while even though I have 17 hours. When we were nicely on the approach

my instructor then got his phone out again. At this point I wasn't sure whether he was getting his mobile phone out to "re-assure" me that he doesn't need to take control, or if he was just being plain rude. Personally I felt quite annoyed at the fact that the instructor was taking no notice and wasn't paying attention to what I was doing. I landed the Cessna 152 with small guidance from the instructor, and when I came down to a rolling stop the instructor's phone starting to ring, the instructor then ignored the call but still got the phone out. After this episode of the mobile phone interruption he started to take notice more in what I was doing during the flight and started to put his phone away. I felt a lot more confidant at this point and a lot more re-assured.

When I next had a flying lesson with my instructor I told him that I was not happy that he got his phone out and was not taking any notice. After this the instructor got extremely "bitchy" and "snappy" with me. Every time I would mention something or ask a question I would get a "telling off" or "blunt" reply. After this flight I felt extremely saddened that my instructor wasn't interested in my flying. After all, I'm paying to be instructed surely? I'm not paying for someone to just 'sit' in the aircraft and take no notice of me, but take more notice on what's showing up on his phone.

Lessons Learned: In this incident I have learned that I think it's about time I chose a different instructor instead of the same one. I don't wish to pay for my PPL when my instructor is not at all interested in what I'm doing.

CHIRP Comment: **Whilst it is possible that the instructor perceived his actions were essential to the operation of the aeroplane, behaviour such as that described is unacceptable.**

As we have emphasised before, if you consider your instruction to be inadequate for whatever reason and a discussion with the instructor fails to assuage your concerns, either raise the matter directly with the flying school management and request a change of instructor or seek another flying school.

The report and comment above were published in GA FEEDBACK. From an AT perspective, an additional consideration is that the use of a mobile phone in similar circumstances would contravene the principle of a sterile flight deck.

CABIN CREW REPORTS

The following is an extract from the editorial section of Cabin Crew FEEDBACK, which may be of wider interest to the CHIRP readership.

Over recent months, CHIRP has seen an increase in the number of reports from cabin crew about the use of PEDs and laptops onboard. This in turn has led to the subject of the carriage of lithium batteries being discussed at recent Cabin Crew Advisory Board Meetings.

Lithium batteries are classified as 'dangerous goods' and are sometimes involved in aircraft incidents, including fires. Often overheating, which is what eventually triggers ignition, occurs in equipment which, unknown to the user, is faulty in some way. However, various origins of overheating have been identified during investigations. There are two principal types of lithium battery - Lithium metal and Lithium ion.

Lithium Metal batteries, sometimes referred to as "primary" lithium batteries, are non-rechargeable and are designed to be thrown away once their initial charge is used up. They are often used in cameras and in other small personal electronics. Consumer-sized batteries of these types such as AA and AAA batteries and flat/round lithium-button cells are permitted for carriage. Fires arising in lithium metal batteries may not necessarily be extinguished using the firefighting equipment currently carried on aircraft. For this reason, the maximum power rating of this type is less than for lithium ion types.

Lithium Ion batteries, sometimes referred to as "secondary" lithium batteries, are rechargeable and are normally found in laptop computers, tablets, digital cameras, camcorders, mobile phones, PDAs, and radio-controlled toys and games. These batteries will generally have a power rating below 100 watt-hours and the number of these which can be carried in baggage, either installed in equipment or as spares, is not limited. Batteries greater than 100 watt hours but not more than 160 watt hours when contained in equipment, with a maximum of two spares, may be carried with the approval of the operator. Batteries greater than 160 watt hours, such as those used to power e-bikes, are not permitted for carriage in either checked or carry-on baggage.

When installed in serviceable equipment, the risk of overheating is low for both types and providing they do not exceed the limits above they may be carried by passengers in either cabin or checked baggage. But it is important to remember that no spare or loose lithium batteries of either type are permitted in checked baggage i.e. they must be carried in the cabin.

Whilst portable electronic devices are plugged into a power supply there is the potential for faulty, damaged or counterfeit batteries to malfunction with serious consequences. Operators are required to establish procedures for monitoring of devices plugged into aircraft systems which may include restricting charging to use of the device only. When incidents as described in this report occur, it is important that cabin crew complete a company incident report. Electrical outlets for aircraft servicing are not designed for charging PED's; use of these could result in thermal runaway of the battery or malfunction of the aircraft electrical system.

The company procedures manual will contain advice on how to deal with a portable electronic device fire in the cabin, for further advice and information crew members should refer to the ICAO Emergency Response Guidance for Aircraft Incidents Involving Dangerous Goods.

CHIRP Comment: **More information can be found on the Skybrary website in a paper entitled 'Aircraft Fire Risk from Batteries Carried by Passengers'**
http://www.skybrary.aero/index.php/Aircraft_Fire_Risk_from_Batteries_Carried_by_Passengers

FAILURE TO SHOW COMPANY ID

Report Text: I was boarding the flight when a member of company staff approached the boarding door. As they did, I noticed that their ID was not visible, so I politely asked to check it as stated in the company manual. The

person replied by saying they had already been through security and asked why I should need to check their ID again. I politely explained that it was our responsibility to see ID for anyone who wished to board and who did not have a valid boarding pass. As I was saying this they were trying to force their way through the door on to the aircraft. At the same time they were talking over me, making fun of what I was saying and stated that as I was checking their ID they wanted to check mine. They then waved their hands in my face saying "ID, ID!"

I would like to confirm that at no point during our conversation was I rude or defensive but after they waved their hands in my face, I just said "I am just doing my job, there is no reason to be rude about it", they then walked past me and walked to the front of the aircraft to the flight deck. I explained the situation to the cabin supervisor but didn't take the matter further.

On another occasion with the same member staff and again me at the boarding door, I asked to see their ID, and again they just walked past me looking at my ID and failing to show theirs.

I have decided to take this further as it has been more than one occasion and also because when talking to other cabin crew within the company it came up they had experienced the same issue with the same member of staff. When I spoke to the dispatcher about what had occurred, they advised me to submit this to the company via CHIRP as the staff member's name had come up already a few times in similar instances.

I think this matter should be addressed promptly as it is a security hazard to our aircraft, flight/cabin crew and passengers. In my opinion there is a lack of training with this individual, or they simply do not approve of our procedures. When it comes to the security of the aircraft, and before something more dangerous arises, it should be addressed by the company.

Lessons Learned: Always check the IDs, no matter who it is boarding or what they say.

CHIRP Comment: The reporter's lesson learned is correct and the staff member who refused to show their ID was wrong. There may be good reasons for their ID not being on display when they approached the aircraft door but they should have presented it immediately when requested. When this request was refused, the reporter was correct to alert the senior cabin crew member. Although on a subsequent occasion when the reporter recognised the staff member, it was again correct to ask to see a valid ID in order to confirm that they were still entitled to enter the aircraft.

Civil Aviation Authority

SAFETY NOTICES

Copies of Safety Notices issued since October 2013 can be accessed via the Publications Section of the CAA Website www.caa.co.uk:

If you wish to contact the CAA Flight Operations Inspectorate or to report any safety matter which is outside the scope of the MOR Scheme please e-mail the CAA at:

flightoperationssafety@caa.co.uk

Address Changes

If you receive FEEDBACK as a licensed pilot/ATCO/maintenance engineer please **notify Personnel Licensing at the CAA of your change of address and not *CHIRP***. Please complete a change of address form which is available to download from the CAA website and fax/post to:

Civil Aviation Authority
Personnel Licensing Department
Licensing Operations
Aviation House
Gatwick Airport South
West Sussex RH6 0YR

Fax: 01293 573996

The Change of address form is available from: www.caa.co.uk/docs/175/srg_fcl_changeofaddress.pdf

Alternatively, you can e-mail your change of address to the following relevant department (**please remember to include your licence number**):

Flight Crew..... fclweb@caa.co.uk
ATCO/FISO..... ats.licensing@caa.co.uk
Maintenance Engineer ..... eldweb@caa.co.uk

Contact Us

Ian Dugmore **Director**
Flight Crew/ATC Reports

Bruce Hunter **Deputy Director (Engineering)**
Maintenance/Engineer Reports

Stephanie Colbourne **Administration Manager**
Circulation/Administration
Cabin Crew Reports

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FREEPOST RSKS-KSCA-SSAT
CHIRP
26 Hercules Way
Farnborough GU14 6UU

Free*fone (UK only)*: 0800 214645 or
Telephone: +44 (0) 1252 378947
Fax: +44 (0) 1252 378940 (secure)
E-mail: confidential@chirp.co.uk

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