CHIRP FEEDBACK

Issue No: 97 1/2011

EDITORIAL

Crew Resource Management - Communication

A number of recent reports have commented on the importance of maintaining effective communication between flight crew and cabin crew and have cited incidents where communication has been poor; reports on this same topic have been received from both groups and have involved several operators.

Reporters have expressed concern that a breakdown in Crew Resource Management (CRM) can dissuade individuals from raising safety-related issues either through the SCCM to the aircraft commander or, when relevant, directly with their company. A related concern is that a lack of communication might have an adverse effect on safety, should an emergency arise.

Specific experiences of poor communication have been reported; some possibly due to the increased time pressures imposed on one or both groups; other examples allege a deliberate reluctance on the part of some individuals to communicate.

It is important to remember that effective communication is a key part of good CRM and is a 'two-way' process. As an example, some cabin crew have an expectation that flight crew members will always introduce themselves. As we have explained, sometimes circumstances might preclude flight crew being able to do so and in such cases there is normally an opportunity for the SCCM to introduce her/himself briefly. Similarly, there are occasions when cabin crew members are unable to introduce themselves to the flight crew. However, such occasions should be relatively rare and it is a matter of professional courtesy on the part of both groups to facilitate and maintain effective communication throughout a duty period.

It is also important to maintain effective communications with other professional groups, such as engineers and ground staff; this issue contains reports of situations involving both of these groups, which might have been avoided by better interaction.

Changes to CAA Communications Documents

With effect from 1 January 2011 the CAA changed the way of communicating safety related and other information messages.

The new communications are:

- Safety Directive (Includes Airworthiness Directives and Mandatory Permit Directives)
- Safety Notice
- Information Notice

These Communications will replace: AIRCOMs; ATSINs; FODCOMs; Heli Training Coms; Information Bulletins and Alerts; NOTALs: NOTEXs NATMAC informatives and Training Comms.

Any of the above publications published prior to 1 January will remain extant until published in the new style communications or withdrawn

Details of the new communications are published on the CAA website and in CAA Information Notice No. IN-2010/01. Current Notices are listed at Page 8.

CHIRP Office Relocation - Important Note

At the end of October 2010, we moved to new offices in Farnborough as a cost saving measure. Having made arrangements with Royal Mail for a Redirection Service, we were subsequently advised after moving that Royal Mail would not provide a Redirection Service as our previous location was within the QinetiQ site and would require additional work at the local sorting office.

Representations both locally and to the Chief Executive Royal Mail were not acknowledged.

We have arranged redirection on an ad hoc basis but these arrangements cannot be guaranteed; consequently it is important to remember that we ALWAYS acknowledge receipt of confidential reports. If you have sent a report to our old address and don't receive an acknowledgement, please contact us again. At the address below.

ATC REPORTS

A Good Working Environment?

Report Text: Due to a possible health and safety hazard caused by multiple long term leaks in the roof of the Visual Control Room, an outside contractor was brought onto the airfield to replace the roof of the Tower.

This work began by erecting scaffold outside the building to allow workers access to the roof.

To begin with this had minimal impact on operational duties as noise was limited to personnel walking around the roof.

However work began seriously with the use of sledge hammers, angle grinders and power drills as the workers began to remove the roof.

We were expected to continue providing an ATC service as normal, but due to the constant loud noise I cannot

be sure I would have been able to respond effectively in an emergency, it also made communication with other staff impossible.

Coupled with the noise, the work caused a large amount of dust and water to pour into the tower.

When asked to stop, the workers refused stating, "They had a job to do"

When management was approached with concerns, we were told we had to put up with it, if we wanted the roof fixed and the leaks stopped.

CHIRP Comment: **This appears to be a case of extremely poor planning for a task that could have been planned well in advance of the work being undertaken. It is difficult to understand how the work was authorised to be completed in the manner described since the Unit management would have been obligated to conduct a risk assessment and to mitigate any risk of disturbance to Unit staff by either arranging for the work to be carried out outside the Unit's normal working hours, amending the normal working hours of the Unit by NOTAM or agreeing alternative temporary arrangements that were acceptable to the CAA.**

Whenever any change of this nature in any organisation impacts on individuals' working conditions, it should be risk assessed and appropriate mitigations put in place.

RAMP SAFETY - FOD

Report Text: Long awaited annual leave finally arrived and decided to go by air from a well-known airport.

Whilst waiting to board the aircraft parked on the apron I happened to be first in queue. While watching with interest the frenzied activity around the great metal bird preparing it for the upcoming expedition I noticed a long length of plastic sheet lying adjacent to the port side of the aircraft forward of the steps blowing gently in the breeze, (none of the airside staff appeared to take any notice of it).

Once directed towards the (forward) steps and without deviating very much from the path I picked up the plastic sheeting (probably palletised freight "wrapping"), rolling it into a ball as I continued towards the steps, and attempted to hand it to a ground staff member descending the steps; to be met with a look of almost horror and, backing away from me, the member of staff declined the 'gift' of the FOD and scooted off into the distance!

Somewhat nonplussed I ascended the steps and handed the FOD to a member of the cabin staff indicating that I had picked it up from adjacent to the aircraft. What they did with it I know not.

As both an airside qualified engineer and an ATCO for many years and having collected a variety of FOD items over those years, often in the course of other duties and not specifically on "FOD plods", I was very disappointed that in the ¼ hour or so that I watched the numerous staff operating around the aircraft and apron with various responsibilities, all of whom were in a position to recover the item, that was clearly visible to me some 50m away, and yet ignored it completely.

Airside safety is, or should be, the responsibility of everyone involved whatever their individual responsibilities may be.

CHIRP Comment: **The policy and procedures for the management of FOD items on the ramp/movement area should be included within an airport authority's Safety Management System and the effectiveness assessed. The matter has been raised with the airport concerned.**

A key contributory factor in several safety-related aspects of ramp operations is that there is no recognisable chain-of-command among ground/ramp personnel at many airports. A CAA/Industry working group (GHOST) and the Health & Safety Executive are reviewing the safety of some ramp activities.

The following CAA (SRG) ATS Standards Department ATSINS and Supplementary Instructions (SI) to CAP 493 MATS Part 1 have been issued since **December 2010:**

SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONS:

Number 2010/07 - Issued: 13 December 2010 - Effective: Immediate

Runway Surface Condition Reporting

ATSINS:

Number 190 - Issued 18 November 2010

Change of Existing SSR Code Allocations

Number 191 - Issued 13 December 2010

Notification of Changes Made by Air Traffic Service Providers

CAA (SRG) ATS Information Notices are published on the CAA website -

www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?categoryid=33 and click on the link 'Search for a CAA Publication'

ENGINEER REPORTS

EXCESSIVE WORKING HOURS?

Report Text: I believe that a company operating from a UK regional airport is flouting the EC working hours directive.

The company operates turboprop services on behalf of a third party; line maintenance for the aircraft is provided by a single engineer. This individual reports for work at around 8.00 am, prepares the aircraft for operation and loads passenger bags. For the rest of the day the engineer will meet each flight for loading and offloading bags and does not leave work until 6.30pm or 7.00pm Monday to Friday. On Saturday he reports at 10.00 am and doing the same job leaving at around 4.00 pm. He has Sunday off if there is no maintenance due.

I feel the passengers are put at risk due to long hours worked by this engineer.

CHIRP Comment: **The reporter's concern was discussed with CAA (SRG) and subsequently a CAA audit was carried out; this confirmed that more than one appropriately qualified engineer was available to support the operation, if required; additional engineering support was also available to cover periods**

of absence due to annual leave/sickness. The CAA elected to monitor man/hour data and aircraft technical log returns on an ongoing basis to confirm their audit findings.

DEFECT REPORTING/RECORDING

Report Text: I was called to attend an aircraft after a fault with a cabin divider section had been called in. The aircraft was inbound from Europe and scheduled to depart for a second European destination with the same flight crew. The Captain told me that they had noticed the problem on departure but had been assured that it would be OK. Not wishing to delay the departure they had decided not to record anything in the Technical Log. I asked if he was going to put something in now - there was a "Nil defects" entry; he did not at that time.

I found that the divider section was attached on one side, but not on the other. I told the Captain that in my opinion it had been a risk to passenger safety. The First Officer then wrote an entry in the Tech Log.

I decided to remove the divider section and raised an "ADD" (deferred defect entry). I then left the aircraft (it departed very soon afterwards). Later in the day I looked to see if the log details had been recorded. It was then I noticed that the wording of my entry was not as I remembered.

The next day I looked at the actual log book's history pages, then confirmed my suspicions by obtaining the original airworthiness record. This clearly showed that two words had been altered, making the sentence appear to have a lesser safety impact. The writing was obviously not mine. In my opinion it is not acceptable for anyone to alter the wording that I have written and obviously put my signature against.

Some crews do not put defects into the Technical Log if they believe it may have an operational impact (delay).

CHIRP Comment: **The reporter's allegation was discussed with a senior quality manager and the circumstances that led to the Technical Log entries were investigated by the company. The company advised that there had been a difference of opinion between the reporter and the Captain as to whether the divider had been insecure to a degree that required its removal; this raised a doubt as to the accuracy of the engineer's Technical Log entry.**

The precise details that led to the difference of opinion are not known and no conclusions are drawn in relation to these; also, the aircraft had been safe to depart as the divider had been removed. However, the report does highlight the importance of ensuring that Technical Log entries are sufficiently detailed and accurate and, when relevant, are agreed by the parties directly involved. It should be noted that retrospectively changing an entry signed by another person is a regulatory offence.

AIRSIDE USE OF COMPANY CAMERAS

Report Text: I am acutely aware of the need for vigilant security and the real threat of terrorism; however I am not aware of the threat posed by a Licensed Aircraft Engineer armed with a camera. It would appear that this Airport Authority is, according to their latest missive, as detailed in an email from our management:

"Airport policy requires company cameras to be marked up as such, so the guards can recognise them and they ask that before any photographs are actually taken that permission is gained from them. Usually this is through their Press Office or Terminal Duty Manager".

They state that this is really so that all the correct people are kept in the loop and if someone reports "unusual activity" then the police won't rush in and question the person involved.

Just what kind of threat does an Engineer with a camera pose, that millions of camera equipped passengers, Google Earth, and public with massive lenses doesn't? Nor should we forget the number of camera equipped mobile phones, even our company mobile phones have cameras.

The only reason we use a camera is to take photographs of damage to aircraft, it would appear now that we need to wait for the green light from the Airport Press Office, Security and Police before we dare proceed, surely someone, somewhere within the Airport can join the dots, just what kind of a threat is a camera equipped Engineer, would this new offence be considered as 'going equipped'?

CHIRP Comment: **The logic in restricting the use of company cameras by engineers with airside passes in the performance of their duties when no restrictions are placed on other individuals with airside access and also passengers is difficult to understand.**

As in other previous cases, the bureaucratic approach adopted by some security managers risks alienating a group of individuals who should be seen as part of the defence against terrorism rather than as is too often the case being perceived as part of the problem. The matter has been raised with the airport authority.

FLIGHT CREW REPORTS

CONTAMINATED RUNWAY SURFACE REPORTING

In the last issue of FEEDBACK we published an ATC report on the reporting of contaminated runway surfaces and published the CAA (SRG) response which summarised the difficulties associated with the accurate measurement of braking action on slush contaminated runways and the consensus reached by industry and the CAA during last year regarding improved reporting of slush contaminated surfaces for 2010. We also referenced the trial of a new system of reporting runway conditions being conducted at London Stansted, Birmingham and Prestwick Airports. (FODCOM 32/2010, NOTAL 2010/09 and ATSIN No.187 refer).

The recent serious disruption caused to airline operations at several major UK airports by snow and sub-zero temperatures for the second year running has prompted more comments on this topic.

(1)

Report Text: I operated a flight to a UK regional airport the day following an 'overrun' incident at the same

airport. Understandably, the incident is a matter for the AAIB and other authorities, but the SNOTAM for my sector described the destination runway as "wet or water patches". Considering the de-icing that night and morning, this was nothing out of the ordinary and wholly acceptable.

On short finals it was clearly apparent that the runway was NOT wet and no water patches were present. It was very difficult to tell exactly the runway condition so I asked for the braking action and the reply from ATC was, "Good - unverified". What is "good-unverified" supposed to mean? Several commanders of departing aircraft were also clearly uncomfortable as they asked for my opinion and for a "pilot assessment" which I duly provided.

A robust method of reporting accurate runway conditions must be made available. Incidentally, the ATIS also didn't cover the runway state or braking action that morning.

Lessons Learned: What system do the authorities have in other parts of Europe where braking action is used daily?

***CHIRP* Comment:** **This report was forwarded to the Air Accidents Investigation Branch; the reporter was subsequently invited to contact the Principal Investigator for the above-referenced incident.**

(2)

Report Text: Reference: FB96; ATC Report 'Contaminated Runway Surface - Reporting.

So the reporting of braking action is considered to be unreliable. If braking action is not reported or unreliable, then I have to consider it to be poor and have to apply crosswind limits for landing or am not allowed to take off.

How is it that airports throughout Europe report braking action without seeming to have a problem? Or are all their reports unreliable as well and we should ignore them? As this winter has been just as bad as last year it really is time to get a solution to this problem resolved, as the UK seems to be out of step with Europe.

(3)

Report Text: Commercial operations are carried out to many European destinations where snow and ice are common and SNOWTAMs give the latest airfield information. This doesn't seem to be the case for some UK airports, where there seem to be only 3 runway states: Dry; Damp; Wet.

Anything worse than wet it seems that the runway/airport is closed. Trying to plan for, and find an open alternate airport of late has sometimes been tricky. If the runways are closed as soon as any contamination other than water is present, it would be good for planning purposes if pilots were made aware of the policy to close runways/airports as soon as ANY snow/ice was present.

Can CHIRP find out what the UK policy is and let the pilot world know please?

***CHIRP* Comment:** **The concerns about the lack of information provided to flight crews on contaminated runway surfaces at major UK airports has been widely shared within the pilot community for many years, particularly among those pilots who operate internationally into destinations where similar adverse weather conditions appear to be managed more effectively. Whilst the difficulties in reporting the friction coefficient/braking action available on slush covered runways are acknowledged, there is a compelling case for airport authorities to provide advice to flight crews when the braking action is assessed to be poor or worse. In the absence of this information, it could be argued that an aircraft commander is denied safety critical information.**

In the case of compacted snow/ice covered surfaces, an assessment of braking action is possible and certified aircraft performance for operating on such surfaces is provided by most aircraft manufacturers. However, the policy of many UK airport authorities has been to elect not to sanction operations on snow covered runways but rather to advocate a 'back-to-black' policy; this policy has been endorsed by the CAA over many years. Such a policy is not unique but, to be justified, it requires investment in the assets necessary to clear runways and manoeuvring areas in a reasonable time; it also requires a reliable method of notifying operators and flight crew of periods of airfield closures and diversion options, also in a reasonable time.

The initiative to improve the reporting runway surface condition by using the US FAA TALPA-ARC tables is to be welcomed. More details of the trial are available at: http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=375&pagetype=90&pageid=1364.

However, it is relevant to note that the major disruption to both airlines and passengers in 2009 and 2010 was not the result of slush contaminated runways but the inability of some major UK airfields either to continue operations on snow covered surfaces or to deploy the assets required to remove dry snow in sub-freezing temperatures to restore a 'back to black' condition in a reasonable time.

It is probable that the concerted efforts of airport authorities, operators and regulators to define more accurately braking coefficients will lead to a more robust method of informing pilots of the runway surface condition in other than dry/wet conditions. It is also reasonable to expect that in the absence of adequate assets to justify a 'back-to-black' policy, that policy should be reviewed as a matter of urgency.

REPORTING OF CB ACTIVITY

Report Text: There seems to be an increasing tendency among UK airfields to not report Cumulonimbus (Cb) in METAR information. The associated rain tends to be just reported as either RA or SHRA where there clearly is Cb (thunderstorm) activity.

A prime example was in the late afternoon of 30 July 2010 where even the Met Office published a SIGMET warning of thunderstorms with tops at FL300, but then the airfields in the area of the SIGMET, in this case MAN

and LBA only reported either RA or SHRA. (in the case of MAN at one stage during the afternoon 2,000m +SHRA, but no mention of Cb in any of the cloudbase information). Overflying the area (on a flight from Scotland to London) around 14:00Z clearly showed Cb activity on the inbound routes to MAN and LBA.

Another example occurred in August involving MAN. The SIGMET clearly indicated Cb activity and later in the day the MAN Actual also included Cb activity. However, the MAN TAF (forecast) for the same period made no reference to thunderstorms.

In my opinion it is forgivable to miss Cb activity in a forecast as part of a complicated weather system. However, to not report it as an observation in an Actual (METAR) and not modify the TAF has potential flight safety implications.

The above is just one example; the same has been experienced on more than one occasion in the recent past.

CHIRP Comment: **This report was raised with the CAA Directorate of Airspace Policy (DAP), which forwarded the two cases referenced in the report to the Met Office for investigation. Subsequently the Met Office provided a detailed response from which the following summary has been derived.**

In the first case, the MAN TAFs for 30 July had identified heavy showers but not thunderstorms or Cb. The UK SIGMET charts subsequently had identified an increase in the risk of thunderstorms; however, this was estimated to be less than a 30% probability, which is the threshold for inclusion in a TAF. A report of a thunderstorm in the vicinity of MAN in the early afternoon did meet the Met Office criteria for amending the MAN TAF but this was not done.

The circumstances associated with the second occasion were similar involving typical warm sector conditions. Whereas the SIGMET issued in the morning included an isolated risk of embedded Cb in the area the risk was not considered to be sufficient to warrant inclusion in the MAN TAFS. Thunderstorm warnings were issued in respect of Warton and Blackpool airports due to the local risk being assessed as above 30%.

The Met Office response noted that TAFs are subject to compliance monitoring to highlight and prevent issues similar to those reported; corrective actions had been taken as a result of the investigation of the first incident

It is worth remembering that Cb activity may not be evident to ground-based observers due to obscuration by lower cloud layers. Airborne reports of significant Cb/Cu build-ups can assist a ground-based assessment of the probability of a thunderstorm occurring.

More on the Use of 121.5 MHz

Report Text: It is very annoying for airline pilots flying over the UK to hear practice PAN calls made to ATC to ask for position help.

We constantly listen to 121.5MHz to be of assistance to other aircraft, often to help them change frequency. It is a requirement these days to do so.

Please could you see if another frequency could be allocated for the practice calls, like 121.7?

I do appreciate the value to light aircraft of the service, and for the training of both the pilots and ATC but it does disrupt the emergency frequency.

CHIRP Comment: **This issue has been raised before in several different safety forums but has assumed greater importance with the requirement for commercial air transport aircraft to monitor 121.5MHz routinely.**

The GA position, most recently endorsed by the General Aviation Safety Council is that the Distress and Diversion service (D & D) is very valuable and unique to the UK; training/practice in the use of the service is important and should be encouraged.

The commercial air transport case is that use of the frequency by GA aircraft making Practice PAN calls on 121.5 is unduly distracting and leads to crews turning down the volume with the associated risk that in the event of a loss of RT contact on the ATC frequency, there could be an increased risk of being intercepted. It is relevant to note that the distraction to aircraft at high altitude can extend well beyond the UK FIR to flights operating in Northern Europe.

The option to make the auto-triangulation service available on an alternative VHF frequency has also been suggested previously. However, it has been stated that the cost of such a provision would be very significant and could not be justified by the MoD, which currently operates the D & D services.

If an alternative frequency is not a viable alternative economically and if the level of disruption to commercial air transport operations is deemed to be sufficiently significant, a National policy on the use of 121.5MHz would appear to be a priority; the issue has been raised as such with the CAA, who are considering a number of options.

Unbalanced Take Off

Report Text: I was scheduled for a flight to the UK with a return flight two days later. On the planned day of departure Operations changed my roster, replacing my planned return flight with a ferry flight from the company's UK maintenance organisation on the following day. I arrived at the maintenance facility to find that the aircraft, which was undergoing a 'C' Check, had a software problem that had rendered the aircraft AOG.

My colleague, also a captain, and I were sent to a local hotel and the next day I went home. On the following day I was again sent back to the maintenance facility. Operations insisted that the aircraft was flown back to our operating base late that evening but my colleague and I decided that was a bad idea. So again I returned home.

Operations had scheduled the departure at 07:00 UTC the next day; however, the earliest train departed at 05:10 UTC finally arriving at the maintenance facility at 08:00 UTC. The first order of business was to collect

the weather and check that the flight plan was filed. The planned take off time was delayed to 09:00 UTC. Then I walked to the maintenance organisation that was completing the C-Check. My senior colleague was already onboard, having arrived more than one hour earlier. He was busy calculating the performance figures and putting them and the route into the aircraft's Flight Management System; I completed the exterior inspection. Back on the flight deck the maintenance representative confirmed that all the documents were complete and tried to rush us so he could leave the aircraft. When my colleague had signed the Technical log and checked the paperwork, the maintenance representative left and we closed the forward entry door.

I sat in the left seat and checked the route and figures in the FMC; they corresponded to the data my colleague had calculated; he reminded me that we had to hurry up. My colleague was PF for the journey so he briefed me on the departure profile; the brief was fairly comprehensive. Pre-flight scan flows and checklists were then completed. Next we called for airport information and start up clearance. ATC reported that our departure slot started at 08:55 and gave us start clearance. After scan flows and checklists we started the engines and completed the 'Before Taxy' checks and checklist. Tower cleared us to taxy but not being familiar I asked for taxy directions to the runway in use. During the taxy my colleague took down the departure clearance.

Tower cleared us to backtrack and line up on the active runway; we lined up as briefed and completed the 'Before Take-off' checks. At 08:55 Tower cleared us to take-off.

My colleague stabilised the engines at around 40% then allowed them to accelerate through 60% before releasing the brakes. As we started to accelerate I started looking for 80kts in the PFD. At the 80 kts call I looked up from the PFD. I was about to call 'Stop' (due to the limited length of runway remaining) when my colleague realised he had incorrectly entered a reduced thrust setting in the FMC; he immediately increased to full thrust, committing us to the take-off. I called V1 and Rotate and we climbed out at V2.

CHIRP Comment: **This 'near miss' incident involved a non-EU operator but highlights a number of general human factors issues.**

1. Similar errors in automated take off performance data have occurred, often as a result of input errors. A recent Australian Transport Safety Bureau report into one such fatal accident concluded that crew errors of this type are a leading cause of accidents and incidents. The ATSB report noted that in Australia the most common mistakes involved crews entering the wrong take-off speed, followed by an incorrect weight or an incorrect temperature.

2. A simple, independent manual gross error check by both crew members should be capable of detecting most errors that have significant safety implications.

3. The circumstances associated with this flight, a non-revenue positioning flight flown by two captains from an unfamiliar airfield, the reporter's delayed arrival and time pressure from both the company and the maintenance organisation to depart as soon as possible were all circumstantial factors.

4. The best defence against making such errors is to stick rigidly to your company SOPs irrespective of the pressures to do otherwise; this is particularly important when the crew is comprised of two captains.

This report is also a good reminder that a single relatively small human error can have a potentially devastating outcome.

Flight Crew Meals

Report Text: My airline now serves Escolar fish to pilots on a very regular basis. This is often the only meal we would typically get in a ten-hour, triple sector duty day.

The Wikipedia definition includes the following:

Like its relative the oilfish (Ruvettus pretiosus), escolar cannot metabolize the wax esters (Gempylotoxin) naturally found in its diet. This gives the escolar an oil content of 14-25% in its flesh. These wax esters may cause gastrointestinal distress in humans called "steatorrhea", the onset of which may occur between 30 minutes and 36 hours following consumption. Symptoms may include stomach cramps, bright orange oil in stool, diarrhoea, headaches, nausea, and vomiting.

CHIRP Comment: **The CAA Medical Branch confirmed that Escolar fish is known to cause nausea, diarrhoea and vomiting in some individuals within 3-12 hours and is unsuitable for consumption by flight crew. Escolar is sometimes mislabelled and sold as 'sea bass'. It was the subject of a Food Standards Agency food hazard warning in 2003 alerting the public to the potential health consequences of eating it. This information was passed to the operator concerned, who confirmed that the matter would be addressed.**

This report also serves as a reminder that flight crew members should always eat different meals prior to and during a Flight Duty Period whenever possible.

Medication - A Reminder

Report Text: In a recent conversation with a junior First Officer, the topic of undertaking/considering voluntary medical drug prototyping arose. I was informed that a fellow FO was currently considering such a scheme in order to boost his/her income. Another colleague and I exchanged wry glances at this admission and I have reported the exchange to my company but feel that this needs to be considered more widely.

The comment was made in good faith during a sympathetic conversation about how tough financially it is for some FOs. I have since discussed this with several experienced colleagues and it seems this is not the only example involving flight crew members.

CHIRP Comment: **The Chief Medical Officer CAA has advised that the Authority's position on prescribed medication is unequivocal; no such medication should be taken except under the advice of the CAA Medical Branch or a CAA Authorised Medical Examiner (AME) as some medications can have adverse side effects and these can vary with differing dose levels and underlying**

medical conditions. Similarly, medication brought 'over the counter' should only be taken after advice from an aviation medicine practitioner. The same advice applies to holders of ATCO licences.

Although Licensed Aircraft Engineers do not require medical certification, the CAA has published advice on medication [CAP 562 Civil Aircraft Airworthiness Information and Procedures - Leaflet 15-6 refers].

MISCALCULATED FDP (1)

Report Text: I was called as soon as my Standby duty commenced and told that I was required for a three-sector Flight Duty Period (FDP) It sounded like a long duty and probably very close to the maximum allowable FDP; I told the caller that I would have to check the times before accepting the duty, and that I would call them back. Upon further inspection, it was obvious to me that the turnround times had been reduced to an unachievable level in order to make the duty fit the max allowable FDP.

I phoned company operations, apprised them of my findings and insisted that the manipulated times be replaced with realistic ones. Operations admitted to a "genuine mistake", corrected the times and acknowledged that the duty did not fit within the maximum allowable FDP.

This is not an isolated example; it is only because I am exposed to this so frequently that I had the presence of mind to check before accepting.

Lessons Learned: There's a rulebook.... Use it!

(2)

Report Text: Our scheduled departure was delayed due snow clearing operations. Operations attempted to persuade the crew to operate a delayed schedule out of home base, which re-planned as a 17-hour duty.

To keep the duty within the limits (including discretion), the company had scheduled the departure time for the return sector as exactly the same time as that for our estimated arrival time on the outbound sector; no time for a turnaround at our destination was scheduled.

Only the persistence of the Captain prevented the company pressuring the crew into operating this illegal flight schedule.

Lessons learned: Does anyone care - CAA included?

LEVEL 2 OR NOT?

Report Text: Reported for a Level 2 duty, completed the pre-fight briefing and made our way out to the aircraft. On arrival at the aircraft, we completed ground checks. During these, I learned that the Captain had not been rostered to complete the duty under the Level 2 Variation; he called operations to advise them that while he wasn't Level 2, I was.

After take-off, the SCCM came into the flight deck and reported problems with the toilets. We contacted our operations department, advised them of the problem, and it was agreed we would need to make a technical stop on the way to our destination.

Operations then advised us that they had changed the Captain onto a Level 2 variation so that he could complete the duty by going into discretion. They had assumed that discretion was a certainty without asking the Captain. We discussed whether he could be changed to Level 2 mid-flight in order to complete the duty. He contacted operations questioning whether it was legal, to which they replied "Yes. We have given you tomorrow off to satisfy all requirements".

Is this legal/acceptable? My understanding is that Level 2 can be rostered at the planning stage - not used whenever necessary to get a duty completed that would otherwise be impossible.

CHIRP Comment: **The CAA Flight Operations Policy Department confirmed that a Flight Duty Period operated under a Variation should be pre-notified; thus, based on this advice, the decision by the company to change the FDP as described was not permitted.**

The above reports and others received indicate that there is once again an increasing tendency for some operators to assume that discretion will be exercised and to plan accordingly. Discretion can only be exercised by the aircraft commander after taking into consideration the particular crew circumstances and cannot be assumed by the company.

It is also relevant to note that in CAP 371 the reporting of discretion to the CAA changes in the case of a Level 2 Duty; this difference is reflected in some operators' Approved FTL schemes, which are the overriding documents.

CABIN CREW REPORTS

PRESSURE TO DEPART (1)

Report Text: Cabin crew were told on two occasions that the First Officer wanted a "quick turnaround". The flight deck door was closed and push back started while pax still standing in the aisle with bags. There was no communication with the SCCM. All crew in the cabin were busy stowing bags.

The SCCM called the flight crew when push back started and advised of the situation in the cabin. Push back halted. A glance out of the flight deck door could have been enough to show clearly that the cabin was not ready (pax, lockers open etc).

The rush to depart came before safety.

(2)

Report Text: Towards the end of passenger boarding there was insufficient space left in the overhead lockers to accommodate passenger cabin baggage. This was communicated to the ground staff, the SCCM also informed them that 5 or 6 bags would require tagging and should be placed in the aircraft hold.

The Captain was informed accordingly. The Captain's instruction regarding these bags was that they were to be placed in the flight deck rather than the aircraft hold. I am surmising that by accommodating the bags into the flight deck we would not delay the On Time Departure of

the service. 6 bags were stacked in 2 piles behind both the Captain's and First Officer's seats without restraint.

My concern is that this practice compromises the safety of the flight by placing large and relatively heavy objects in such a way that they could under abnormal flying conditions move around the cockpit area and impede the ability of the pilots to fly the aircraft.

The door of this aircraft opens into the cockpit; any baggage movement would have the potential to restrict the opening of the door preventing cabin crew access to the flight deck in an emergency situation such as pilot incapacitation.

Whilst the contents of these bags have been security screened, in the present climate of increased terrorist threats and acknowledging the creative inventiveness displayed by the modern day terrorist, surely it would be prudent to keep the above items out of the flight deck.

***CHIRP* Comment:** **Many operators encounter the problem of excess cabin baggage but some appear to have more effective procedures to address the problem; these include the senior cabin crewmember being authorised not to permit the aircraft door(s) to be closed until all carry-on baggage has been stowed appropriately. If this is not possible, the excess items are tagged and placed in the hold.**

Company policies can influence passenger behaviour; for example, the problem can be mitigated by applying the above procedure or by ground staff rigorously checking carry-on items prior to boarding particularly when flights are full. Conversely, permitting interlining international passengers to board a smaller short-haul flight with excessive hand baggage or not adequately controlling carry-on baggage on flights where an additional charge is levied for hold baggage can exacerbate the problem.

Stowing excess baggage in unapproved stowages or on the flight deck is both illegal and, in the case of an emergency situation arising, potentially dangerous.

Civil Aviation Authority

INFORMATION NOTICES

Number: IN-2011/02 - Issued 24 January 2011

Airspace Change Proposal Framework Briefing: Establishment of Controlled Airspace (Temporary) (CAS(T)) in Support of London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Number: IN-2011/03 - Issued 24 January 2011

Statement of Intent to Consult - Harmonised Transition Altitude in UK and Irish Airspace

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

Peter Tait — **Director**
Flight Crew/ATC Reports

Mick Skinner — **Deputy Director (Engineering)**
Maintenance/Engineer Reports

Kirsty Arnold — **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

Reproduce FEEDBACK

FEEDBACK is published quarterly and is circulated to UK licensed pilots, air traffic control officers and maintenance engineers.

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