

CABIN CREW FEEDBACK

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EDITORIAL

CHIRP SURVEY

Inserted into this issue you will see there is a CHIRP Survey. Every five years a review of CHIRP is conducted, and this includes the user groups. This year the Cabin Crew Programme, which started in 2001, is included for the first time.

We would be grateful if you could take a moment to complete and return the questionnaire to us by simply folding it and posting it to us at our FREEPOST address using the pre-glued, pre-addressed sheet provided.

If you would prefer, a copy of the Survey is also available to complete on our website - www.chirp.co.uk

The Survey is your chance to comment on the Cabin Crew Programme and CABIN CREW FEEDBACK. Is the Programme worthwhile? Could it be improved? Is the content of Cabin Crew FEEDBACK helpful?

Your support is very important in ensuring that the Programme continues to meet your needs and those of your colleagues.

REPORTS

DOOR EXIT SIGNS

Some of the aircraft in the ### fleet have emergency exit lights that do not work, so when we take off and land in darkness, there is no lighting in the cabin at all. We are not allowed to use the cabin emergency lights so if anything happened in the aircraft how would we know where the exits are?

Our Safety Department are aware of this yet we still fly with no emergency exit lights.

This matter had been reported to several departments in the company but no action had been taken. The reporter persisted by submitting a CHIRP report.

We brought the matter to the attention of the Engineering Quality Manager. Subsequent

investigations revealed that the aircraft involved did not conform to the operator's/major manufacturer's requirements. The aircraft on the fleet without illuminated emergency exit signs were subsequently modified and pending the modification interim SOP changes were introduced.

HAND BAGGAGE

The amount of hand-baggage being allowed on board our aircraft far exceeds the permitted limits and then includes:

- very large wheelie bags
- vast suit carriers
- huge backpacks

We have the ability to control the size of the hand-baggage but never do.

If the holds are closed, often crew will DUMP extra bags in the crew rest area - this is not secure.

Also, large kiddies pushchairs are allowed on board which should be hold loaded.

Operations Manuals should contain procedures to restrict the size of luggage brought on board the aircraft. Crew members have the responsibility to relocate luggage that does not comply with the operator's requirements to a hold. In instances where excessive hand baggage is brought onto the aircraft, operators should endorse cabin crew actions in complying with the Operations Manual procedures.

Operators should also provide guidance to ground handling agents, to ensure that oversized luggage does not reach the aircraft, where it can lead to a confrontation between a passenger and crew members.

Company procedures should also detail arrangements for handling and stowage of pushchairs.

The crew rest area is not an approved stowage for luggage and should not be used for anything other than its intended purpose. Stowing baggage in a remote crew rest area could present a fire risk.

A Cabin Crew Safety Newsletter

from the Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme

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CABIN SECURE?

I am very curious as to why we are so stringent in securing our cabins for take-off and landing as well as during taxiing and yet just before landing or on taxiing to stand, we are allowed to distribute coats and jackets to our premium passengers. It seems to me that by pampering them so, we are also ensuring that the coats and jackets, specifically, will be obstacles during an emergency evacuation. Why does my airline state that the CAA allows such a procedure when "securing the cabin" for landing, becomes a futile exercise. Please enlighten me!!!

The CAA policy on cabin crew duties during taxiing is contained in Notice to AOC Holders (2/95) issued on 16 January 1995 and still current.

Para 6.2 states: 'Cabin attendants who are required to be carried in accordance with Article 19 of the Air Navigation Order (ANO) (Article 20 ANO 2000), must be seated at their crew stations during the taxi phase of flight except for the purpose of performing safety related duties.'

Para 6.4 states 'After landing, required cabin attendants should remain in their seats for as long as practicable - ideally until such time that the aircraft arrives at the gate when aircraft slides (if fitted) are required to be disarmed.'

Following publication of the NTAOCH CAA (SRG) issued a further letter dated 5 May 1995 to AOC Holders. This reiterated the Authority's position that the ANO requires that cabin crew are carried for the purpose of carrying out duties related to the 'interests of the safety of passengers' and should remain at their duty stations with their seatbelt fastened except for safety-related duties.

Finally, CAA (SRG) advise that if coats/jackets are distributed before landing the item should be worn or stowed in an approved stowage area, i.e. overhead locker or under the seat in front.

VISIBILITY OF ID'S

I challenged an aircraft dispatcher to show me their ID as it was not visible. They showed it to me but refused to keep it on display claiming they had been through several layers of security to get to the aircraft and "didn't need me to challenge them on security".

On another occasion a ground engineer walked past me two rows from the flight deck door. Again, they begrudgingly showed me their ID but refused to keep it on display.

I find it counter-productive to security that some ground crew take offence at being challenged regarding ID's.

Department for Transport Legislation requires all staff to display the Security Pass issued to them, or one recognised, by the Aerodrome Manager at all times while in a Restricted Zone (RZ) of an airport. The RZ includes all aircraft aprons and areas of terminal buildings affording access to these aprons. The Aerodrome Manager must ensure that anyone failing to display a pass is disciplined under their terms of employment. DfT Inspectors will also take appropriate action where staff are discovered not displaying their pass.

This report was forwarded to both the cabin services and engineering departments of the Company for their information. Subsequently the Company issued a reminder to all engineers that IDs should be clearly visible at all times when onboard the aircraft.

LOOK OUT BELOW

We distribute and collect the in-flight magazines during each flight. I have some concerns over this practice:

- We have no dedicated stowage for the magazines so they are kept in overhead lockers. This can result in excess of 150 magazines being stowed in lockers. As the magazines are re-used they are placed loosely into the lockers and are not bound together. This results in magazines falling out of the lockers when the locker is opened. On take-off and landing the magazines tend to move around a lot and are extremely difficult to contain. I have myself witnessed magazines landing on passengers' heads. I believe it's only a matter of time before somebody loses an eye or sustains a head injury due to this practice.
- There are restrictions on the amount of weight these lockers are capable of holding and I believe this restriction is definitely exceeded by the magazines. The magazines themselves are quite bulky so 150+ of these along with passenger luggage must surely pose a safety risk.
- The crew have to distribute the magazines immediately after being released from their seat by the Captain - sometimes little more than 90 seconds after take off. Again there must be safety-related concerns as to a person at the rear of the cabin making their way to the front of the cabin when the aircraft is still ascending steeply whilst carrying a pile of magazines. The magazines are heavy and can obstruct the carrier's view of the floor and any feet, bags etc that may be sticking out. Again, an accident waiting to happen.

The above points have been raised with management on many occasions by many people. I was recently told that we would be getting containers to stow them in due to

the concerns highlighted in my second point. As yet the containers have yet to materialise. If the Company are unable or unwilling to provide suitable stowage then the magazines should be put into seat pockets until a time when a safe solution is found.

This matter was raised with the Company who have now changed their procedure for storing in-flight magazines; the magazines will now be kept in a dry stores container. The In Charge has the overall responsibility of when to distribute the magazine, but as a matter of Company policy, the magazines will continue to be handed to passengers.

CABIN CREW SICKNESS POLICY

My Company has a policy of limiting cabin crew sickness to 3 events in 6 months. After this the crew member is called in to the office and required to explain their sickness levels. The Company has always been willing to offer crew time off for compassionate reasons, death in the family for example, but these occasions are now also quoted in these interviews as occasions when a cabin crew member has been unavailable for work. Cabin crew members are not paid when they are sick, even if they report to the office for office duties, or if they report for work and are subsequently sent home. The Company employs temporary cabin staff in the summer, some of whom are offered permanent posts at the end of the season. One such crew member was told she was not being offered a permanent position because she had had three sickness events over the summer season. On one of these occasions the Captain had sent her home because she was unfit to fly.

As a result of this regime, cabin crew members are reluctant to go sick when they are legitimately unfit to fly. If the Captain realises that they are unwell and sends them home, this will have a detrimental effect on their personal files and future career. At the same time, the Company has reduced the cabin crew strength so crews are always flying up to the limit. The local cabin crew manager has no medical training, but offers crew members medical advice. This manager also has little understanding of Flight Time Limitations, and has called cabin crew members into the office when they are on standby without informing the flight deck crew when they were subsequently called out for a flying duty. It is their practise of phoning cabin crew members on their days off for work-related inquiries. A junior cabin crew member was recently threatened with disciplinary action by this manager if she did not report for work on a day off.

The result of this policy is that Captains often discover after departure that a cabin crew member is unwell. If this is reported, the cabin crew member will face disciplinary action. The sickness level tends to increase

because crew members infect each other - when flying with a cold, for example. There are obvious flight safety implications - in the event of a decompression such a crew member could become incapacitated, for example. I would be interested to know the CAA's position on the Company's sickness policy. It is possible to come to work in an office with symptoms that should preclude flying, and this should be taken into account when drawing up a policy to cover flying crew.

Both the individual crew member and the Company have responsibilities in relation to fitness to perform safety related duties.

JAR-OPS 1.085 (d) lists conditions under which a crew member must not perform duties on an aeroplane: in the circumstances of this report, the following subparagraphs are relevant: Sub para (4) "If he is in any doubt of being able to accomplish his assigned duties"; and Sub para (5) 2 "If he knows or suspects that he is suffering from fatigue, or feels unfit to the extent that the flight might be endangered."

These conditions must be specified in every Operations Manual and operators must not prevent crew members from complying with these instructions. For example, operators must not insist that a crew member who knows or suspects that he/she is in any doubt of being able to accomplish his/her assigned duties, or is fatigued or unfit to the extent that a flight may be endangered must still operate on a flight. It is important that rostering/crewing departments are educated as to the types of sickness that, whilst being acceptable in the workplace on the ground, are not acceptable for flight duties; these include colds, cold sores or a breakout of acne. Note that the requirement does not prevent an operator from managing a sick crew member's time with respect to non-operating activities.

CAA (SRG) considers Company sickness/absence management policies to be a commercial matter, except where an employee feels that he/she has been pressurised to fly when he/she is actually sick. In such a case the individual should report the matter to the CAA to permit the specific issue to be investigated. If you feel unable to do this, consider submitting a CHIRP report.

If you are unfit for duty, notify your Rostering/Scheduling Department as early as practicable.

DID YOU REMEMBER?

Did you remember to complete the Cabin Crew Survey? Too much hassle to lick the glue on the page and post it? Why not FAXBACK on 01252 394290 or complete a copy online - www.chirp.co.uk

Go on, you know it makes sense!