

CABIN CREW FEEDBACK

No: 13

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EDITORIAL

SURVEY RESULTS

We have now had the opportunity to read all the comments received from those of you who kindly returned your Survey Forms; thank you. Of the 35,000 Forms distributed, some only recently, to date we have received 717 responses, a return rate of 2.1%. This may not sound very good but for a survey of this type the numbers are typical. The overall approval rating for the CHIRP Cabin Crew Programme in the responses was 89% with a similar percentage of respondents stating that if the need arose you would consider reporting to CHIRP in the future. 99% thought the availability of independent confidential reporting for cabin crew was a good idea. 94% thought CHIRP made a useful contribution to flight safety.

A number of you stated that nothing seemed to change or nothing seemed to be implemented. As I mentioned in the Summer 2004 issue of CABIN CREW FEEDBACK (Issue 12), CHIRP has no executive/regulatory authority and is unable to 'force' airlines to change their policies. Our role is to highlight shortcomings/incidents and request that they be investigated and addressed. Where there are significant safety-related matters raised in reports, these are forwarded (with the reporter's permission) to the Civil Aviation Authority (Safety Regulation Group) for consideration, as the Regulator.

Another frequent comment was that no follow-up information/feedback is published to reports that have appeared in CCFB. Again, as I mentioned in CCFB 12, if you have reported to CHIRP and there has been an improvement as a result of the action we have taken, let us know and we will publish a follow-up.

A few suggestions as to the layout of CCFB were received and these are currently being explored. Watch this space!

Finally, following your comments on information provided in CCFB, we now undertake to:

- Answer the query/question in the report more precisely.
- Give answers in 'plain English' with less jargon.
- Give more specific answers rather than just quote the regulations.

Keep the reports coming!

Kirsty Arnold
Cabin Crew Programme Manager

REPORTS

OPERATING WITH FAULTY DOORS

(1) USE OF CABIN DEFECT AND TECH LOGS

On arrival in AAA I went to open the L1 door. I lifted the red handle and the door cracked open letting in daylight. When I pushed the 'down' button nothing happened. I tried again and still nothing. I informed the flight crew and also tried pushing the door out - the door was jammed and wouldn't move. I then tried the 'up' button to see if I could re-align the door and try again. Nothing. A member of the flight crew tried to push the door out, putting their full force against it and nothing happened. The dispatcher was asked to open the door from the outside using the external door controls. This was successful.

An engineer was called, closed the door and opened it again twice with no problems. The defect was signed off; service was resumed. (The aircraft had suffered a similar intermittent problem previously.) After the next sector the door worked as normal.

Arriving back to AAA the same thing happened; the door jammed. An engineer was called. He brought the door in and opened it again various times and it worked as normal. He suggested I hadn't lifted the red handle all the way up and maybe I was at fault! He asked me for a demonstration on how I opened the door - it opened. We were now getting close to our scheduled departure time, the engineer and Captain discussed the situation and decided not to enter this into the Tech Log to avoid the aircraft being grounded, however, the Captain said it had to be looked at that night and if it happened again at all that day the aircraft would be grounded. We were cleared to go even though this was a safety-related issue and the problem was intermittent.

When I next operated on this aircraft I asked if the defect had been looked into. It hadn't, the engineer explained they couldn't find any problems.

I felt exasperated by the whole situation, it seemed to me that the priority was a smooth running schedule ahead of safety and feel that a door jamming two out of four sectors should be seen as U/S. Do you agree?

Yes. The door problem should have been entered in the Cabin Defect Log on each occasion difficulty was experienced with opening the door.

The Captain should have reviewed the Cabin Defect Log and transferred any significant technical defect, such as

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A Cabin Crew Safety Newsletter

from the Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme

that reported, to the Aircraft Technical Log (Tech Log), in accordance with the Operations Manual procedures.

An engineer is required to review all defects entered in the Tech Log, to carry out defect investigation/rectification on each defect and record the action taken in the Tech Log. If no fault can be found, some defects may be carried forward for a further report or an in-depth check back at Base; a record of this must be entered in the Tech Log.

In a CHIRP follow-up call to the reporter it was established that the matter had been reported and had been dealt with internally. The reporter was not aware of the procedures for making Cabin Defect Log entries and the relationship with the Aircraft Technical Log, these were explained.

Take care when applying force to open a door; always ensure steps/jetty are in position if appropriate.

(2) MEL REQUIREMENTS

When carrying out my pre-flight checks I noticed that the R4 door was faulty (as the slide pressure gauge was in the red sector, instead of being in the green sector). I reported this straight away to the In Charge and continued with my other duties. We then started to board passengers. There was an engineer on board the aircraft so I asked if the message had been received about the R4 door - it hadn't. The slide was subsequently inspected and found to be inoperative.

There was no spare slide at AAA (UK), so this meant that we would either incur a lengthy delay or we would have to off-load some of the passengers. The engineer went to speak to the Captain.

About 10 minutes later the doors closed and a PA was made preparing the cabin crew/doors for departure.

The In Charge came and told us that the Captain was not happy about delaying the aircraft or off-loading any of the passengers. We were instructed to pretend that we hadn't noticed the faulty door. The Captain involved was one of the airline's senior captains. The engineer and some of the cabin crew were not at all happy about this situation, I very nearly refused to operate the flight, but it was too late as we were already taxiing out to the runway. I flew on the same aircraft the following day and the same door was still faulty. Again I reported it.

We were very lucky that we didn't have an emergency situation on board the aircraft, as not only was there a possibility of a failed slide, but the slide also acts as a slide raft in the event of a ditching, which is imperative when flying over water.

I am angry with myself for operating the flight because at the end of the day it was the passengers' safety at risk, and primarily that is why cabin crew are carried onboard aircraft.

CHIRP raised this matter with the operator (with the reporter's consent). In response to our initial enquiry, we were advised that the aircraft had been despatched in accordance with the company's Minimum Equipment List (MEL). The MEL stated that the

aircraft could depart with an inoperative slide provided that there was sufficient raft capacity (which was the case) and in the event of a ground evacuation the slide could be used as a hand held 'rag' chute. However, it is clear that the cabin crew had not been advised of this.

Also, there was no Cabin Defect Log entry noting the defect nor was a Technical Log entry made stating the aircraft was being despatched in accordance with the MEL.

The MEL issue was raised with CAA (SRG), who noted that other UK operators of this aircraft type do not have a similar MEL entry permitting despatch in the circumstances described. The Authority undertook to review this aspect of the company's MEL.

Subsequently, the company's MEL has been amended to state that in this event the door is declared inoperative. The aircraft may still be despatched but with a restricted passenger load and in accordance with the Operations Manual and MEL procedures.

If you are instructed to ignore safety-related faults whilst carrying out your pre-flight duties, as alleged in this report, please speak with your Line Manager or send us a CHIRP report. Safe operations are not an option - they are essential.

MIND YOUR STEP!

I have already made several reports (to the Company) in the past about the cables that run under the carpet across the aisles. They make the trolleys jump every time you cross over them. I have spilled tea and coffee several times on my hands and arms, with a few passenger 'near misses'. I have also ended up with a full duty free trolley on my toes! Have we got to wait for a serious injury to do something about it? They are very hazardous!

CHIRP raised this with the Company. Modified cable coverings are in the process of being fitted to provide a more gentle slope as opposed to the 'bulky lump' previously encountered. Another CHIRP result!

ABP'S - SUITABLE OR NOT?

Could you please clarify the requirements for ABP's located at overwing exits? On a recent flight there was a pax wearing a hearing aid sat at an overwing exit. The pax was moved to another seat as they did not fit into an ABP description. The In Charge commented that the pax should not have been moved. Would it not be easier to have some safety standards concerning ABP's?

If it becomes apparent that a passenger is substantially hard of hearing then it might be worthwhile relocating the individual to a non-exit row seat. However, if the passenger is wearing a hearing aid and can respond to a normal conversation, relocation would not be necessary.

The criteria for the seating of ABP's should be included in your company's Operations Manual. If these include the use of a passenger briefing card and a passenger is unable to understand or is reluctant to follow the instructions, then his/her suitability should be assessed and he/she should be relocated if considered necessary. Check your Operations Manual for specific guidance.

SECURED ITEMS

I have noticed that crew leave trolley catches on doors up, stowage catches up and oven doors not secured properly with the handle and catches up and also teapot stowage/bev maker handle up during service, why not replace/secure them?

Crew do not seem to understand the importance.

CHIRP raised this report with the Company who have responded by sending an e-mail to all crew reminding them of the importance of properly securing galleys/trolleys etc using the latching and restraint systems provided.

FAULTY TROLLEYS

Again and again I find **dangerously** faulty trolleys on board flights. On virtually every flight trolleys are loaded which have no brakes, 'square' wheels, doors which won't stay open, pins missing so tops won't latch properly. I have seen crew actually lifting and carrying trolleys (which is easier than wheeling them), crew and pax injured by doors hitting them, trolleys falling over, trolleys wedged diagonally in the cabin to stop them rolling etc. This is a daily occurrence. Our engineering department seem to do nothing to rectify this!

CHIRP raised this report with the Company who clarified that catering organisations are normally responsible for the repair of trolleys and not Engineering. The Company provided CHIRP with a very detailed explanation of how trolleys are repaired and the process which needs to be followed. This was forwarded to the reporter for information.

If you encounter a faulty trolley tag it and, if you have the facility to do so, record it on your flight paperwork, don't leave it for someone else. Defective trolleys are not normally added to the Cabin Defect Log so unless you follow your company procedure the problem will not be rectified. In this instance, the catering organisation was reminded of their responsibilities.

Unsecured trolleys should never be left unattended and are placarded to state this in order to meet airworthiness requirements.

DO NOT DISTURB!

Extremely early report - 0300GMT. 30 minutes into flight there was a request from the flight deck for a blanket, then I got a call from the F/O to say they were not to be disturbed

for 1 ½ hours. I said that I could not comply with that request as I was obliged to make checks every 20 mins and said if they did not want to be disturbed the only option would be to unlock the flight deck door so that we could make visible checks. They rang back a few minutes later and said we should carry out our calls as per normal!

I am an experienced cabin crew member, would a less experienced In Charge have stood their ground?

Well done to the reporter for insisting on compliance with their Company SOP. It is worth bearing in mind that SOPs of this nature are there to check for pilot incapacity and their wellbeing, not just to provide refreshments! SOPs should not be deviated from.

OVERWEIGHT CABIN CREW

I guess this is 'reporting myself', but I was VERY shocked and looking around, I know others will be in the same boat but either couldn't care or won't admit to it. I was doing First Aid part of exam and had to give "Annie" 2 rescue breaths, "she" was on the floor and therefore I was on my knees bent double. What happens when you bend double? You constrict your diaphragm and even more so when overweight. Could I give those breaths? NO WAY ... I had restricted, constricted, my own breath and . goodbye "Annie", she was dead. The weight issue is 'sort of' my fault but has anyone said "diet/exercise or be grounded"? No.

My "fat" still makes it OK for me to squish into a seat row and retrieve stuff from the ground. I have seen cabin crew **bigger** than myself and one who had to go down the aisle semi crab-wise. We are on board for emergencies and I feel that it is a MUST that weight should be monitored. I gave MYSELF a fright at an inability to maybe help someone else and those in the same boat and bigger should be taken to one side-put on a medical regime and monitored and if nothing happens they should be GROUNDED. This of course would have to be done MEDICALLY, rather than a 'boss' type person being accused of being vindictive ...even though it would be THEM who had to do the referral.

I have put my self on a strict diet regime - one only needs a nudge but sometimes it needs, with safety in mind, to be done officially ...we are NOT in an office ...we are on board for a purpose. I am not after those who are so thin and anorexic, just a sensible weight regime/size monitoring for all those who fly for SAFETY'S sake.

This issue may have been reported in a light-hearted manner but the safety implications are obvious. If you are very overweight, would it hamper your ability to carry out your emergency duties? If this might be the case, the remedy is in your own hands. Cabin crew are required to have continuing competence and fitness to operate in accordance with the procedures specified in the Operations Manual. This would include fire-fighting, evacuation, ditching and other scenarios where fitness and size might have an impact.

Well done to the reporter for taking-on an embarrassing topic - hopefully the diet is going well!
