

CHIRP FEEDBACK

Issue No: 14

Winter 2004

EDITORIAL

A NEW LOOK!

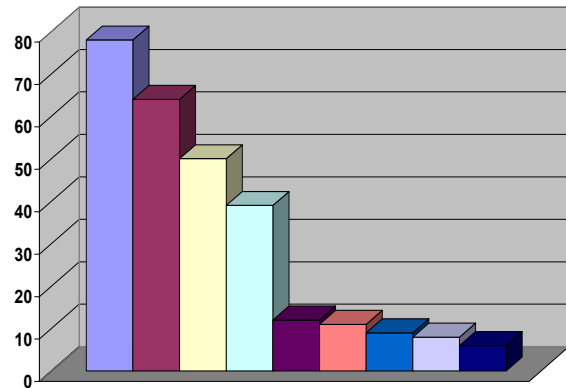
Happy New Year! We hope you like the changes in this issue of CABIN CREW FEEDBACK; these are as a result of suggestions we received from your comments from the **CHIRP** Survey which we conducted in July 2004. Hopefully you will find the font easier on the eye and Report Text/**CHIRP** Comments in a clearer layout.

One of the most frequent suggestions received as a result of the **CHIRP** Survey was for us to publish trends on the reports we receive. Here you will see we have included a bar chart of all the reports received to date since the inception of the Programme in July 2001.

If you have any comments on the layout please let me know.

Kirsty Arnold
Cabin Crew Programme Manager

Cabin Crew Reports Received July 2001 - December 2004



Number of Reports Received Since the Last Issue of CABIN CREW FEEDBACK:

21

Report Topics Have Included:

Flight Duty Periods - Queries of Rosters

Incorrect Tech Log Entries

Crewing Dept Interpretation of FTL Schemes

Alleged Non-adherence to SOPs

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BACK ISSUES

Back issues of CABIN CREW FEEDBACK are available on our website: www.chirp.co.uk

Key:

- Crewing/Rosters/Duty Time/Discretion/Fatigue/CRM/Breaks
- Standard Operating Procedures/Safety Emergency Procedures
- Faulty Equipment/Health & Safety
- Security
- Abusive/Awkward Passengers/Potential to Become Awkward
- Experience/Training
- Commercial Pressure
- Potential Health Risks
- Sickness Management

Rosters/Duty Time/Breaks - Misinterpretation of Company FTL Schemes by either Company or Aircraft Commander leading to onerous duty periods and/or requirement to work into 'Discretion'; alleged pressure by either flight crew or Company; Crewing Departments changing rosters at short notice; disturbance of scheduled rest; lack of knowledge of FTLs.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)/Safety Emergency Procedures (SEPs) - Take-off/landing without receiving 'Cabin Secure' report and without notifying Cabin Crew; emergency exits blocked during ground operations by drinks trolleys, size and quantity of hand baggage/cabin baggage including large pushchairs; suitability of ABP's.

Faulty Equipment/Tech Items/Health & Safety - Unserviceable/faulty cabin equipment; galley/catering equipment in a potentially dangerous condition; fumes in cabin; insect infestation in cabin crew rest area; crew unable to adopt brace position due to crew seat being too close to pax/slide bustle; excessive cabin temperatures; pressure to operate with unserviceable doors/slides; faulty trolleys and latches; storage of pax meals in warm ovens, storage of dry ice in warm ovens.

Security Procedures - A number of alleged security breaches/lapses in relation to airport/airline security procedures and SOPs.

Abusive/Awkward Passengers - Reports of passengers who have been rude and abusive, and instances of cabin crew being physically assaulted.

Commercial Pressure - Reduction of crew below normal 'service' complement to minimum certification numbers not leaving enough time during turnarounds to complete cabin security sweeps; rostered minimum crew levels leading to alleged pressure by Company not to report sick when staff report unfit for duty.

CABIN CREW FEEDBACK is also available on the **CHIRP** website - www.chirp.co.uk

A Cabin Crew Safety Newsletter

from **CHIRP** the Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme

REPORTS

BRIEFINGS DOWNROUTE AND FDPs

Report Text: The airline that I work for has insisted that a briefing is conducted down route in the hotel prior to transport to the airport. The cabin crew must be available 10 minutes prior to transport to accommodate this.

Several of the flight crew have said that when we commence the briefing we are starting our FDP as we are conducting company business. Is this true?

This also raises the issue of when leaving Base, again on the above mentioned duties, we have to check our suitcases in at the terminal building then make our way to the crew room in order to complete the mandatory pre-briefing duties such as checking urgent memos and company communications etc.

The briefing commences at 90 mins prior to departure as does our FDP. However, in order to complete check-in etc the crew are having to arrive at least 120 mins prior to departure in order to complete the above.

As this is all company business would it not affect the start time of FDP?

CHIRP Comment The following general information relating to the definition of a Duty Period was provided by CAA (SRG) and published in CABIN CREW FEEDBACK 10 (January 2004):

A Duty Period is any continuous period during which a crew member is required to carry out any task associated with the business of an aircraft operator. As a result any task necessarily carried out prior to the flight departure forms part of the specified FDP and should be reflected in the Standard Report Time specified in the Operator's FTL Scheme. Such tasks will include checking of personal cash and floats, briefing of in-flight duties and reading any pertinent Crew notices.

The checking-in of personal luggage, if undertaking long haul flights, arises from the nature of the flight and as such forms part of the pre-flight duties. Obviously Operators will have differing procedures for crew luggage check-in, dependent on the crew office location.

CHIRP Comment: Down-route briefings are often conducted in hotels to provide crew with a quiet and private environment rather than a noisy airport. Many operators prefer this but also allow the In Charge to decide exactly where the briefing is given. When doing so, they should consider that it allows all crew members to participate safely.

As regards the checking-in of crew luggage this procedure is often easier for crew than 'lugging' cases onto the crew bus etc, therefore, a happy medium needs to be struck in relation to any additional time required to check-in luggage and extending the FDP.

In the case of this particular report the matter of hotel briefings was raised with the Company concerned; the hotel briefing has now been incorporated within the FDP. The Company have also changed their procedures in that cabin crew now go straight to the crew room at

report time. Their baggage is now checked-in within the FDP. A Notice advising crew of this has been issued. Another **CHIRP** result!

SEATS FOR TAKE-OFF AND LANDING

Report Text: It is becoming a common occurrence for cabin crew (particularly at the rear of the aircraft) to be reading newspapers and magazines with their feet up on galley canisters and sometimes not putting their harness on for take off and landing.

Cabin crew should sit in their seats with their knees/feet together and think safety. It is very worrying that this is **not** being adhered to **at all**.

CHIRP Comment: This report was discussed by the Cabin Crew Advisory Board (of which a number of members are experienced cabin crew and flight crew representing a cross-section of operators). The Board offered the following comment. By all means, read a magazine during the cruise - if you are entitled to a break - but not on take-off and landing. Remember sitting in the correct position while strapped-in during take-off and landing is, first and foremost, for your own personal protection. Behaviour, as described above, is both foolhardy and unprofessional. If you see a colleague behaving in such a way 'have a word' with them.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE FIT TO FLY?

Report Text: During a pre-flight briefing it became evident to me that one of our cabin crew was suffering from cold-like symptoms. Upon questioning, the individual stated that she had received a verbal warning for excessive sickness and was reluctant to declare herself sick. I stated that if she was sick that I would not permit her to fly. She responded by saying that the symptoms were not too bad and that she felt well enough to operate. I was persuaded but remained suspicious that she might just be saying this to avoid further disciplinary action.

After operating the first two sectors of a four sector day she had to declare herself sick.

My Company has a policy of disciplining cabin crew for sickness. This policy is evidently placing undue pressure on individuals to operate when they should not and has an adverse effect on safety.

CHIRP Comment: This report was submitted by a flight crew member and raises an interesting point.

As previously mentioned, the key issues here are:

1. If you are sick/unwell/unable to operate, don't be pressurised into flying. There are personal risks and operational safety issues to consider.
2. If you are in the small minority tempted to use sickness as an excuse for taking additional days off, don't, you might subsequently need time off for genuine sickness.

Remember, it doesn't have to be a cold to prevent you from reporting for duty. You could have a cold sore that is infectious to others if handling food. You could have

a sinus problem which could be made worse by reporting and therefore make your absence from work much longer. If you don't think that you would be able to do your job to the best of your ability in the event of an emergency then don't operate!

EXCUSE ME CAPTAIN, SHOULD YOU BE DOING THAT?

Report Text: On the ground after the first sector the aircraft developed a technical fault - flaps not functioning correctly, a warning light appeared on the flight deck. The flight crew requested an engineer who boarded, looked and said he wouldn't sign the aircraft off. The flight crew proceeded to refer to the re-set procedure notes, stating that this was a common problem with the aircraft type and this procedure normally cleared the problem. They tried the procedure once, no joy, tried it again, no joy. They then received a call from someone in the Company who talked them through the procedure. The problem got worse and the person on the other end of the phone said the aircraft was now definitely 'tech' and going nowhere (I presume this was an engineer).

As cabin crew with no knowledge of aircraft systems and procedures, I am just wondering whether, if a fault is a regular and usual fault in an aircraft type, flight crew may become complacent and think it just needs a re-set when it could be a genuine malfunction.

Is this normal practice?

CHIRP Comment: The Captain was correct in saying that this is a known problem with this particular aircraft type. As a result, the manufacturer developed an approved procedure to re-set the flap system. The re-set procedure often corrects temporary, small mis-alignments and the aircraft is then perfectly safe to continue operations. However, as the reporter experienced, sometimes the problem is more complex and needs an Engineer to check further into the system. The most likely person the captain was speaking to would be an Engineer in Maintenance Control.

As regards the first Engineer who came on board, there are a number of procedural reasons why he said he could not 'sign the aircraft off'. Firstly, he may not have worked for the Company, nor had approval to work on this aircraft; this is not unusual at outstations. Secondly, even if he was a Company employee, he may not have been qualified to sign off such a defect on that aircraft type.

Well done to the reporter for raising this query, if you are in doubt about something or have what you deem to be a 'trivial' query just ask - either your Company or **CHIRP**, for peace of mind. Thank you for taking the time to raise this report.

CHIRP Note: If you did not receive a copy of CABIN CREW FEEDBACK from your Crew Room/Pigeon Hole and you would like copies to be made available to you and your colleagues, ask your Cabin Crew Manager/Base Manager to contact Kirsty at **CHIRP** on 01252 395013 or kirsty@chirp.co.uk and she will arrange for copies to be mailed direct to your Base.

U-TURN? NO, YOU TURN

CHIRP Narrative: This report is reproduced from the NASA US Aviation Safety Reporting System "Callback" - April 2004 issue and was submitted by a First Officer:

Clear concise communications are usually preferred over lengthy conversations. In the case of this flight attendant's request, however, a few additional words could have prevented the Captain's misinterpretation.

Prior to engine start, company procedure requires securing the cockpit door. This procedure was followed and the door indicated "locked". During climb out, the flight attendant called the flight deck. The Captain answered and after a brief conversation, he instructed me to level the aircraft and prepare to return to [departure airport] due to a disturbance in the cabin. During the descent, the Captain assumed control of the aircraft. As we were nearing [destination], the flight attendant called the flight deck to ask if we were landing. I replied that we were. The Captain took this opportunity to get additional information regarding the situation in the cabin. She advised him that the only problem was that the cockpit door was open. The door was then secured and the flight continued to its original destination. Apparently in her initial report to the Captain, the flight attendant had simply stated, "Turn around". Her intent was for the Captain to see the open door, but the Captain perceived her comment to mean that the flight was in jeopardy and the aircraft should be turned around and returned to [departure airport].

EXPERIENCED CREW

CHIRP Narrative: We received a report regarding the alleged lack of experience of some cabin crew being promoted to Senior with little flying experience. The report was anonymous; therefore we were not able to represent the reporter's concern to their Company, as it was not possible to agree an appropriate course of action with the reporter. The reporter said that:

"... I think it should be law that any In Charge on a aircraft should have at least 5yrs flying experience."

CHIRP Comment: Remember, we need your personal details to agree how we might best assist you. Please note that we return ALL your personal details once we have been able to answer your query/provide you with feedback, these are never passed or disclosed to your Company.

Regulation states that 'experienced' is one year of flying. An operator can promote a person as a senior cabin crew member post if they have had at least one year's experience as an operating cabin crew member and have completed an appropriate senior cabin crew member course.
