

CHIRP FEEDBACK

Issue No: 16

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EDITORIAL

Since the last issue of CCFB (Issue 15 Spring 2005) we have received further reports of flight/cabin crewmembers leaving their mobile phones switched on in flight. CAA studies have shown that the use of mobile/cellphones in flight including voice, data or text communication, may cause interference with aircraft systems with possible adverse effects that could endanger the safety of the aircraft. Please remember that, unless your company SOPs specifically state otherwise, all intentionally transmitting portable electronic devices (PEDs) must be completely switched OFF once the doors are closed and should remain OFF until the moment that a passenger door is open.

Some 'new generation' PEDs are marketed with a 'flight' or 'plane safe' mode, which permits the device to be used with the transmitter switched OFF. The CAA has issued advice regarding these devices and, unless your company procedures include specific instructions regarding the on-board use of such devices, their operation should be subject to the same restrictions as those detailed above for a mobile/cellphone.

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BACK ISSUES

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

Number of Reports Received: 01.04.05 - 21.06.05:

47

Report Topics Have Included:

Aircraft Familiarisation/Training Issues
Security Issues
Safety -v- Service/Commercial Requirements
Discretion/Out of Hours
Mobile Phones - Cabin Crew
Staff/Relatives with Young Children in Jumpseats
Crew Complements

REPORTS

SPEEDY SERVICE

Report Text: Flight time was less than an hour. At "10 mins to landing" call I was in economy cabin clearing in (having left one crew member to clear premium cabin) - at this time the other crew in economy were still serving drinks from the 3 bar trolleys. I was approx half way through collecting rubbish when the call to land came. I returned to the front and called to inform the flight crew of the situation. All the crew went into the cabin to collect rubbish and just finished in time for landing.

I do not believe this to be an isolated incident as many crew have reported similar situations on short flights with high pax loads.

The service is time consuming as so many questions are involved!

The crew with me were all experienced crew, I dread to think what would have happened if we had had two out of six new entrants!

CHIRP Comment: If time is pressing-on and the In Charge thinks that the crew is running out of time to complete the service then the service should be altered accordingly. Once the seat belt signs have been illuminated for landing all service should stop. Clearing-in should commence and the cabin secure must be completed in preparation for landing. It is not unknown for air traffic control to expedite the landing process. If you are experiencing time constraints to complete the service required, report the problems (with timings if possible) to your

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

Company so that they are aware of the safety implications, such as cluttered galleys, unsecured passengers, hand baggage and trolleys, and have the opportunity to review the cabin service.

OVERCROWDED GALLEY

Report Text: My concern relates to passenger and crew safety in the event of a decompression. My Company encourages pax to move about the aircraft and in the light of D.V.T worries this in itself is fair enough. However, when we end up with lots of pax in the galley we have more people than masks. Sometimes we can have 15+ in the galley. We have four portable oxygen bottles in the rear galley of a ### (wide body) and the drop down O₂. The amount of O₂ available in the event of a decompression would not be enough.

For safety I would like a cap on the number of passengers allowed in the galleys so we are all able to get to a mask safely. At the moment if I limit the customer numbers in the galley, I think the Company would think I was in the wrong and letting them down with customer service.

CHIRP Comment: In this and similar situations the number of passengers standing in the galley should be kept to a sensible maximum, primarily for their safety but also for their comfort. After having the reasons explained to them, passengers should see this as part of the customer service and accept a temporary curb on their freedom of movement. Most Companies would accept this as striking a fair balance between safety and service.

NON COMPLIANCE WITH COMPANY SOPS

Report Text: After take-off I called the flight crew as part of my normal check. I received no answer to my call. I waited approx one minute, still no response, I called again. Still NO response. I waited a further minute and as three-four minutes had passed with no response I started to worry.

I tried to enter the flight deck using the normal method for requesting access and again, no response and the door did not open. I consulted with a colleague who agreed that this was very worrying and not the norm.

I tried the normal method for requesting access again and the door opened. I entered the flight deck rather relieved only to be greeted by a tirade from the Captain. He appeared very agitated over my persistent attempts to contact the flight deck and shouted at me saying they were very busy and I should wait for them to contact me. I tried to explain that I understood this, however, it was SOP to check on the flight crew and 5 minutes was a long time to receive no response. (It was not at a 'critical' stage of flight.) I also tried to explain that in my experience the flight crew would ask me to 'standby' on the interphone, call me back within a minute or on entry to the flight deck I would be instructed to wait with an

open hand gesture. The Captain remained aggressive and refused to accept this as the norm.

We had NO further communication from the flight crew apart from the '10 minute to landing call'. After landing the Captain refused to speak to me.

CHIRP Comment: The best course of action to resolve an issue such as this would be to submit a Company report, as this would enable the Company to address the reporter's concern directly. Unfortunately the reporter didn't feel able to do this. It should be noted that a number of operators have introduced 'Standby' as a formal response (holding statement) to their cabin crew to indicate that they are temporarily busy.

LACK OF BRIEFING

Report Text: During climb ex-AAA (UK), Captain made alert call for In Charge. The briefing was given - undercarriage had failed to retract, aircraft continuing to destination (US), engineering advised flight deck on alternatives to attain retraction. 15 minutes later, crew informed that undercarriage had retracted - flight continued.

On descent into US, several crew voiced their concern for the duration of the flight no-one had received any communication from the In Charge/flight deck that all was OK for landing - i.e if u/carriage would come down for landing.

I and other senior crew repeatedly asked the In Charge for an update but none was given. We landed with no problems - albeit a rather nervous landing for crew. On the crew bus we waited for an explanation/debrief from In Charge/flight crew who got on the bus with no word/acknowledgement at all. The cabin crew were angry at the lack of communication following the incident.

CHIRP Comment: This matter was raised with the Engineering Department of the operator concerned; the nature of the technical problem was such that the aircraft was never in any danger. However, the cabin crew didn't know this and it would have been helpful if the In Charge had been able to provide them with additional information and update them on the situation. This would have prevented any unnecessary concern.

PRESSURE TO DEPART

Report Text: Boarding commenced very quickly with 2 crew at D1, 1 at D2, 1 at D3 and 1 at D4. We were aware that it was to be a very quick taxi and on push back were still seating passengers. The video demo started almost immediately on push back with the crew standing at their demo positions and as per SOPs remained at these positions until the video had completely finished before securing the cabin.

Once the video had finished we all started to secure the cabin. I turned to secure from D3 to D2 with my colleague working to meet me from D2, they signalled to me that they needed two infant extension

seat belts, I in turn signalled to another colleague at D4 for the belts as this was the nearest stowage. I collected the belts and as I turned to take the belts down to my other colleague we heard the 'cabin crew seats for take off call' and the chimes indicating our immediate take off.

I ran down to D3 to pass on the belts as the engines powered up, we both fell into the toilet. My colleague made their way back down the cabin and gave the belts to the passengers. We had no time to check that the infants were secured properly. I tried to make my way back towards my crew seat at D4 but found it impossible and so took a passenger seat at D3. There was no crew member at D4. This meant that for take off there was no crewmember covering D4, two infants were not secured with the extension seat belts and the cabin had not been secured at all. This was unsafe and unprofessional.

On speaking to the In Charge about the incident it became apparent that they had been put under immense pressure from the flight crew to pass on the cabin secure, they had been asked for the checks half way through the demo.

Cabin secure should not be passed on until the In Charge has received all the checks from his/her crew. This is the only way to stop this unsafe practice. In Charge crew members need to be reminded of the cabin secure procedures as this is not an uncommon incident.

CHIRP Comment: This is a good example of the pressure on flight crew to meet a take-off slot and the consequent pressure on cabin crew to prepare the cabin for take-off. In the first instance, all passengers should be seated before the aircraft moves. Also, in this and similar situations, it is important that the In Charge emphasises to the flight crew that the cabin is not secure.

The Air Navigation Order (ANO) makes the Captain responsible for ensuring that passengers and cabin crew are secure for take-off and landing, but the responsibility is delegated to the In Charge/cabin crew for obvious reasons. Remember that by giving the cabin secure report when it is not, the In Charge is accepting responsibility should anything go wrong.

If taxi time is short and Company SOPs permit, a manual safety demonstration might be performed to save time or crew members could start to secure the cabin whilst the video is still playing. As we often say, safety is paramount - don't feel pressured into passing on 'cabin secure' unless it is.

CAN YOU SMELL THAT?

Report Text: After landing we noticed an EXTREMELY pungent smell reminiscent of burning plastic - Captain told us it was merely urine, although this was his opinion, not an engineer's conclusion. I was very concerned as the smell was in an isolated area and was not permanent as it came and went, but on landing it was extremely offensive. The crew asked

for an engineer to execute a further examination as we were worried. The Captain was reluctant to do this as he argued that we had already done several sectors and was satisfied that nothing serious was wrong.

As pax boarded, they expressed concern at the smell and on insistence of crew, engineer was called and could not find source of smell. However he agreed that further investigation was necessary. Captain was again very reluctant as pax had already boarded. Within minutes the engineers located the source of the smell - burst sewage pipes - I was very worried that the aircraft had flown a number of sectors with this problem not fully investigated.

CHIRP Comment: Well done to the reporter for their perseverance! This report emphasises the importance of reporting any unusual smells, noises etc, to the flight deck crew.

CHIRP Narrative: These reports were reproduced from the NASA US Aviation Safety Reporting System "Callback" - March 2005 issue:

The following ASRS reports, submitted by two appreciative Captains, bring some well-deserved attention to the often-overlooked efforts of cabin crews.

(1)

During cruise, we were approaching thunderstorms with reports of bad rides at all altitudes. The Number One Flight Attendant advised us of an ill passenger. The cabin crew followed their procedures and enlisted the help of two nurses and a physician. The First Officer and I worked a plan with Dispatch for a divert if necessary. The Flight Attendants called regularly to update us on the passenger's condition. After the physician determined that there was some improvement, we continued to [destination] while coordinating with Dispatch to have paramedics meet our flight. So far this report sounds routine, but I can assure you that the situation was not. Our Flight Attendants were taking care of this occurrence during an all-nighter while riding a bucking airplane. I would characterize the ride as continuous, moderate chop on the flight deck which would make it substantially worse in the rear of the cabin. The Flight Attendants performed flawlessly.

(2)

Soon after level off at FL370, the Purser called and said that a passenger was ill. There were no medical personnel onboard. The passenger's condition changed rapidly. He had a weak pulse and was soon unconscious. We turned back to [departure airport]. Dispatch was notified and they coordinated with ATC, Tower, ramp, and paramedics. The Flight Attendants used the AED [Automated External Defibrillator] and they also accomplished rescue breathing until paramedics boarded the aircraft. The paramedics came back later and reported that the passenger was now responsive. They commended the Flight Attendants for actions that, without doubt, saved the passenger's life. I was extremely proud to be in the company of these wonderful and very professional Flight Attendants.