

CHIRP FEEDBACK

Issue No: 18

Winter 2005

EDITORIAL

REPORTS ON SECURITY ISSUES

A reminder that it is our policy not to publish reports on aircraft security issues, we do accept reports of this nature. All reports, security or otherwise are dealt with and, with the reporter's consent, are raised with the relevant agency.

NEW METHOD OF REPORTING TO CHIRP

It is now possible to send reports via the **CHIRP** website. To utilise this facility, log on to www.chirp.co.uk and click on the button 'Submit Report'. Enter your contact details then complete your report in the window that appears. On submitting, the report will be e-mailed directly from the website to the **CHIRP** office.

Using this method no information will be retained on the computer that you use to send the report; however, as with other e-mail transmissions, it is important to remember that we are unable to guarantee the safety or integrity of the information whilst in transit.

The web-site reporting facility also permits you to select the method by which you wish to receive confirmation that your report has been received.
Kirsty Arnold
Cabin Crew Programme Manager

Number of Reports Received: 01.10.05 - 31.12.05:
19

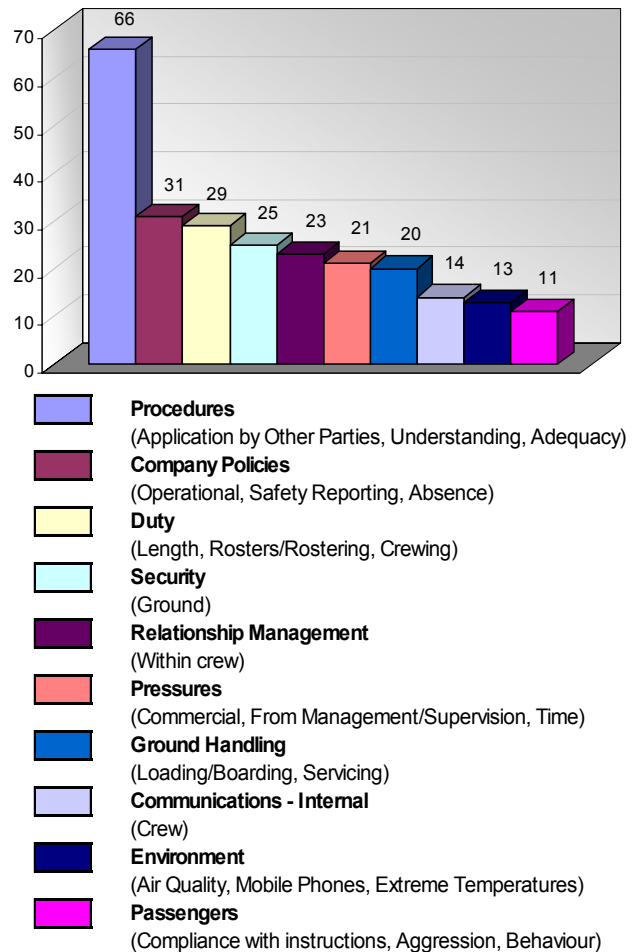
Topics Have Included:

Security Issues
Excess Hand Baggage
Rostering Queries/Duty Hours
Non Adherence to SOPs

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Most Frequent Cabin Crew Issues Received 1 December 2004 - 30 November 2005



REPORTS

FLIGHT CREW COMMENTS - ON TIME DEPARTURES

CHIRP Narrative: The reports under the title 'Rush, Rush, Rush - On Time Departures' that were published in **CABIN CREW FEEDBACK** Issue 17 (Autumn 2005) were also published in **Air Transport FEEDBACK** Issue 76 for the benefit of flight crew; the reports prompted a number of responses, of which the following extracts were typical:

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

(1)

Report Text: The first report I do understand. However, on about half the occasions I have made an "Is the cabin secure?" call to the cabin crew, they apologise and say they forgot. On half of the others it is me that has forgotten to put the slider over (men are not good at multi tasking).

On the other 25% of occasions I have called to ask how long it will be. This is not impatience on my part, it is because ATC want us to line up and take off immediately and I do not want to block their runway if we are not ready.

It is not a reminder to hurry up, it is a request for information.

(2)

Report Text: I write with regards to the Cabin Crew Report that appeared in the above issue, titled 'On Time Departures' and would like to comment on the first report (of the 2).

How many times as flight crew have we sat at the holding point waiting for 'Cabin Secure' and waited patiently, only to find that the cabin crew have forgotten to call us, even though the cabin is in fact secure? With onboard CCTV you can often tell that the cabin crew appear to be strapped in at the front and have to use your judgement to call them (usually after listening in on the interphone to hear what cabin conversation is occurring). I know it has happened to me on several occasions. Why did they forget to report Cabin Secure to the flight deck? Could be any of a number of reasons; interruption to their flow, environmental capture (thought they had done it, but that was the last sector!) or perhaps just because, like us, they are human and fallible.

An interruption to their 'flow' can be counter-productive, but surely a professional should remain a professional when a request for information comes from the flight deck? If it was a 'hurry up' call, or 'we are waiting for take-off' then the flight deck have been guilty of a lack of good communication too. Perhaps the communications or operating culture in the airline concerned leaves a little to be desired if the cabin crew felt they had to resort to CHIRP. Surely an adult-adult chat in the cruise or after flight would be an appropriate way of addressing the issue?

Perhaps we (flight deck and cabin crew) should remember the skills of good communications and think before pressing the transmit button...be it on the interphone or email to CHIRP.

CHIRP Comment: As many of the respondents noted, effective communication - in both directions - is the key to good crew co-operation and would overcome the reported problems.

PAX STANDING DURING TAXI

Report Text: Upon arrival at AAA (UK) the aircraft pulled up approx 100ft short of the gate, the seat belt signs remained illuminated yet 30+ pax got up and opened

overhead lockers. The cabin crew did not ask anyone to sit back down. The aircraft then taxied the last 100ft with a large number of pax standing, overhead bins open etc.

I feel the crew could have done more as pax should not be standing when the aircraft is taxiing.

CHIRP Comment: This report was forwarded to the cabin safety department of the company concerned for their information/action.

Passenger safety is paramount. Should this happen on a flight that you are operating, it would be appropriate to take reasonable measures, including a PA, to ensure passengers putting themselves at risk are reminded that they must remain seated, with their seatbelt fastened, until notified otherwise by the flight crew.

OVERLOADED TOILETS

Report Text: The company recently removed the gash cart from the front galley of the ### so that there is more bar space available for stock. This has led to an increase in the number of gashbags in the front of the aircraft, not only making eating our food somewhat unpleasant, but generally cluttering up the front galley and area outside the L1 door. The main concern among crew is that on a busy flight, there may be up to three full gash bags in the toilets, and when weighed down by unused meals, bottles and newspapers, these can become quite heavy. The Company have told us that it is acceptable for us to place this number of gash bags in one toilet, but it is NOT acceptable to place a 5kg piece of hand luggage or crew bag in the toilets as they are "not stressed for the weight!

CHIRP Comment: This report was forwarded to the company for their information and as a result a notice has been issued reminding crew that the company permits a maximum number of two fireproof gash bags per toilet.

As the reporter notes, hand luggage/crew bags must be in an approved stowage and are not permitted to be stowed in a toilet. CAA advises that "waste bags may only be stowed in toilet compartments during the final phases of flight, provided that they contain only low density waste such as paper and plastic cups".

PRE-LANDING CABIN SECURE CHECKS

Report Text: A 40-minute call was made by the flight deck telling passengers details of arrival etc. This was followed by a PA from the cabin crew reminding passengers that in 20 minutes time the seat belt sign would come on and to use the facilities prior to this.

The next call in the cabin was from the flight crew saying that we had five minutes to landing. A rushed PA was made and cabin crew began quickly getting passengers seated and galleys cleared. While all efforts were made to get the cabin as secure as possible it was not done to company standards or procedures. Crew gave checks as completed and things stowed in toilets etc so as seats could be taken. All crew strapped in and then on approach the flight crew aborted the landing due to

helicopter in vicinity and did a go around. Cabin crew remained seated.

Why did the flight crew, realising that they had not given the compulsory 20 minute call and with only 5 minutes to landing, not just stop landing procedures and go in to a hold until the complete checks were done? Five minutes to check a full [large aircraft] can never be achieved correctly. This of course was also the cabin crew's fault as we should have just said **NO** and done the checks safely and correctly.

Upon-landing absolutely no apology from the flight crew as to the lack of correct procedures being followed and insufficient calls made.

CHIRP Comment: Communication between the flight crew and cabin crew is again the key to avoiding this situation. However, cabin crew should not solely rely on the flight crew to provide accurate timings. This, along with keeping in contact with the flight crew, to keep abreast of changes should avoid confusion such as that experienced in this report.

EXCESS HAND BAGGAGE

(1)

Report Text: I am very concerned that the situation regarding excess baggage is not getting better, but in fact worse. On many occasions pax are arriving on board with more than one item of hand baggage, one pax recently had four pieces weighing in excess of 32kgs in economy. This is not a one-off. On another occasion a pax had a suitcase that took-up a whole overhead bin and they asked for assistance in lifting as it was too heavy! Wardrobes are regularly overstacked.

Self check-in is making the situation worse.

CHIRP Comment: This report was forwarded to the company for their information.

(2)

Report Text: AAA(UK)-BBB(Caribbean). This flight is notorious for excessive amounts of hand baggage, to the point where overhead stowages and wardrobes become dangerously overloaded. Crew are told by the airline not to lift hand baggage into overhead lockers, but, with many elderly passengers on board this is often not heeded. On this day passengers boarded with at least three pieces of hand luggage each; becoming aggressive and abusive to the crew when there was no space for bags that were far too heavy for the aircraft cabin. The dispatcher dismissed requests from the crew to place baggage in the hold, pushing for an on-time departure. This resulted in the crew being placed in a stressful situation attempting to stow excess hand baggage in already overloaded stowages.

CHIRP Comment: Some operators manage this process very effectively by providing effective filters at check-in, the departure lounge or the gate check. A viable company policy should exist to prevent excessive baggage reaching the aircraft door on boarding and this should be enforced.

REQUEST TO REPORT EARLY FOR DUTY

Report Text: We are made to come in prior to report time to print off paperwork and check for new notices. I have queried this with the company a few times, and its disregard for the rules laid down in CAP 371, and received this response:

"All crew must report for duty (report time of STD minus 1.30mins) fully prepared for Pre Flight Briefing. Fully prepared means latest notices read and understood, pigeon-hole checked etc. A large number of crew with home PC's check prior to leaving for work and others report early to enable them to do it in the crewroom. "

Few crew *do* check from home as our argument is that it is "our time". I also received an email from the CAA (before I was sent the above) saying that such practice is "not considered acceptable for an operator to put pressure on crews to report in advance of the stated report time, unless that additional time is counted as part of the FDP. "The company's head of safety has also told me in the company forum that "other airlines do this," but I am of the understanding that this is not the case and if it is, doesn't necessarily make it right.

I have attempted to have this addressed several times with the Company but have been stonewalled each and every time, and I am wondering if you can help?

CHIRP Comment: Many crew members elect to arrive in the crew room 10-20 mins prior to report as a travelling time buffer and use that time for admin tasks if they have not experienced any travel delays, in much the same way as anyone travelling to and from their place of work. However, if the company requires crew members to report early on a routine basis in order to complete administrative duties which are not part of the pre-flight activities, then CAA (SRG) advises that the additional time should be accountable as a duty and forms part of the FDP.

SECURITY AT AIRPORT

Report Text: I noticed that security staff did not check one of our pax on AAA(Europe)-BBB(UK) flight, when he walked through the security gate and beeped. There were two security officers and they talked about checking him (in their native tongue). I clearly heard the one officer say that he should be checked, but the other one said it was OK to let him go, although he beeped when walking through. I reported the matter to the Captain and he was taken off the aircraft to be checked again.

Point: security staff should ALWAYS check every customer who beeps at a "gate".

CHIRP Comment: Well done to the reporter for their perseverance. This report goes to show what can be achieved when there is effective communication with the captain.

In instances such as this, cabin crew need to notify the station manager immediately, whenever possible, to have the matter looked into 'on the spot'. Reporting the matter after the event often makes it difficult to conduct an investigation.