

CHIRP FEEDBACK

Issue No: 19

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EDITORIAL

FLIGHT DECK ABSENCES

After receiving a number of reports from cabin crew members regarding prolonged absences from the flight deck, the following text was published in the most recent copy of Air Transport FEEDBACK for the benefit of flight crew:

We have received a significant number of reports from cabin crewmembers on the topic of flight crewmembers leaving/being absent from the flight deck for extended periods of time, leaving the flight deck manned only by a single pilot. In some cases these absences have coincided with other flight crew members taking rest.

The periods of absence have been 30 minutes or more; a number have involved visiting wives/family members travelling as passengers.

Such situations incur the risk that even in normal circumstances the sole occupant of the flight deck has no effective monitor, as is required by operational and certification regulations. Absences from crew seats by on-duty pilots should only be for as long as operational tasks or physiological needs dictate.

Number of Reports Received: 01.01.06 - 31.03.06:

51

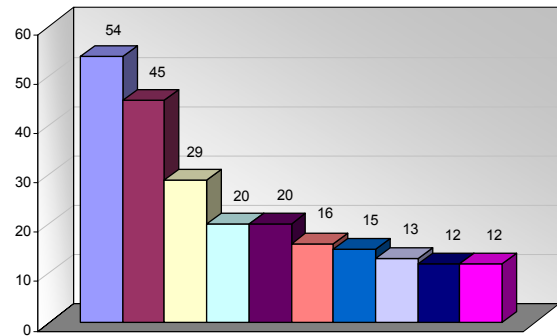
Topics Have Included:

- Long Duty Periods/Minimum Rest/Rostering Issues
- Engine Repairs
- Engineers Equipment
- Flight Deck Access

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE?

	Page
Contacting CHIRP	Bottom of This Page
Use of Double Trolley by One Crewmember.....	1
Aircraft Differences Training.....	2
Is It Safe for Cabin Crew to Leave Their Seat Whilst Taxiing?..	2
Lack of Communication/Emergency Briefing.....	2
Long, Legal Duties.....	3
Turbulence at the Rear of the A/C.....	3
Report Form.....	Outside Back Cover

Most Frequent Cabin Crew Issues Received 12 Months Ending February 2006



- Procedures**
(Application by Other Parties, Understanding, Adequacy)
- Duty**
(Length, Rosters/Rostering, Rest)
- Company Policies**
(Operational, Absence, Safety Reporting)
- Pressures**
(Commercial, From Management/Supervision, Time)
- Security**
(Ground)
- Communications - Internal**
(Crew)
- Ground Handling**
(Loading/Boarding, Servicing)
- Relationship Management**
(Within crew)
- Environment**
(Air Quality, Mobile Phones, Extreme Temperatures)
- Regulation/Law**
(Knowledge of)

REPORTS

USE OF DOUBLE TROLLEY BY ONE CREWMEMBER

Report Text: With the recent introduction of new bars, our procedures now require the In Charge to commence service at Row 1 using a double trolley alone whilst two other crew commence service at about row 10 with another double. Having pulled the double trolley from the rear with a colleague I would like to know if it is legal for the In Charge to do this. The company says that it is because a single trolley has a risk of toppling. We used to operate with the In Charge having a single and the two crew had a

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A Cabin Crew Safety Newsletter

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

double. On our other aircraft which operate with four crew, two doubles are used then.

Certain crewmembers have brought the issue up, however, are always being told, "This is now the procedure, therefore follow it".

Surely this isn't legal nor compliant with Health & Safety; I would appreciate any comments as I would like this issue straightened out!

No manual handling training regarding the damage which may be caused through use of a double trolley by one person has been implemented. It was a change that occurred literally overnight. I know from colleagues who have worked for other airlines that they were not allowed to do this.

CHIRP Comment: There is no legal requirement covering the movement of carts, which can vary in weight significantly depending on their contents. The CAA publication CAP 757 "Occupational Health & Safety on Board Aircraft" contains guidelines on 'best practice'. In relation to this report it states:

Para 6.4.1 When moving heavy carts/trolleys (e.g. full double carts), it is good practice for two crew members to assist with the movement of the cart.

CAP 757 can be downloaded/accessed from the CAA website: www.caa.co.uk/docs/33/cap757.pdf.

Whereas some changes require training, in other cases a differences briefing or a company notice will suffice to raise awareness of the change(s). Most companies will carry out a risk assessment to determine whether training or a notice is required.

AIRCRAFT DIFFERENCES TRAINING

Report Text: My company is about to place some additional aircraft in service with a different cabin configuration, which I feel I am not trained to operate on, while the company says I am. I have received training to operate on this type with the current configuration. We generally operate this aircraft with the legal minimum of 3 crew.

Recently I received an update for my cabin crew manual, and noticed it contained diagrams for a new cabin configuration. The new configuration involves changes to the cabin crew seating and the stowage of safety equipment to permit more passengers to be carried.

I queried with my safety training manager whether or not I could operate on this aircraft without receiving any training whatsoever, and was told that since I now have received information on the new configuration in my updated manual I could do so. I have not been given any information about this aircraft configuration on a training/refresher course, nor have I ever been on board one - but still I am told I can be sent out to operate on one. Is this really correct? Can I really operate on the aircraft with this configuration without receiving any training and only being given a few pages for my manual?

CHIRP Comment: This report was raised with the operator, who stated that the changes were relatively minor and thus could effectively be communicated by a Safety Notice. The operator confirmed that a Safety Notice had been issued to alert all crew to the changes.

The CAA (SRG) Cabin Safety Office confirmed that it was content that the company had followed the correct procedures. The changes in the Safety Notice will be covered in tests during Recurrent Training.

As with the previous report, it is worth noting that training is not essential for every change. Operators determine the most appropriate method for notifying crewmembers in consultation with CAA (SRG).

IS IT SAFE FOR CABIN CREW TO LEAVE THEIR SEAT WHILST TAXIING?

Report Text: After landing and during the taxi, a passenger began to vomit. A crew member left their seat and went to the galley at doors 1 to fetch towels/sick bags to assist pax. I reminded the crew member that they had a door responsibility and should not be out of their seat during the taxi. I questioned the In Charge who stated that the crew member's actions were acceptable in the circumstances.

I maintain that this was a non life-threatening medical situation which could have been dealt with using resources in the seat area until the aircraft had arrived on stand and "doors to manual" were called. By leaving the door unattended, passengers' lives and the overall safety of the aircraft were potentially put at risk should an emergency evacuation have been necessary.

As I understand it, ALL crew are to remain strapped in their seats until the "doors to manual" call is made.

CHIRP Comment: Subsequent to raising this report with the operator concerned, the company clarified their SOPs to state that crew should stay seated unless for a safety related duty.

It is important to assess the risk in leaving your seat, such as maintaining a clear way back to your assigned door should the need arise, but inevitably it's a judgement call on the day. If you are operating as single crew then it might not be appropriate to leave your door.

In the case reported, if a passenger is unexpectedly taken sick it would not be unreasonable for a crew member to assist the sick passenger.

LACK OF COMMUNICATION/EMERGENCY BRIEFING

Report Text: Coming in to land we had taken our seats. The landing gear came down and then went up and we aborted the landing. The In Charge made an announcement to the pax as the Captain was busy and said he would speak to them when he could and that the reason for the aborted landing might have

been another aircraft on the runway. The Captain then called the In Charge after approx 10 min and said there was a landing gear indication problem but did not say what and that he was sure we would be landing normally. After landing the Captain made an announcement to the pax and said not to worry about us being surrounded by fire trucks as the indication for the nose wheel being locked had malfunctioned (light was not working) and the fire trucks were a precaution.

On this aircraft you can't see anything out of the door window so this announcement was the first we knew of the actual nature of the problem. I feel that in this situation a briefing should have been given, thereby putting the cabin crew in the loop. When the In Charge discussed the matter with the Captain he said that he had not wanted to panic anyone. The In Charge replied that the crew were not going to panic (after all this is their job) but rather would have been prepared if the nose wheel had in fact collapsed. Not telling the pax is one thing but not telling the crew who would have to manage an evacuation is quite another.

CHIRP Comment: The reporter's concern that they should have been informed is valid; in the situation described, more information from the flight deck would have helped.

Some operators have SOPs for precautionary landings, which include a NITS (Nature of emergency, Intention of Captain, Time Remaining and Special Instructions) or similar briefing for the benefit of cabin crew members; these SOPs reflect 'best practice'.

LONG, LEGAL DUTIES

Duty Started: 0945 Duty Finished: 0005

It is unacceptable for airlines to be compromising safety by rostering such long duty days.

Today I operated the AAA(UK)-BBB(N Africa)-AAA and was totally exhausted by the end of the flight. I feel that if we had had an emergency and had to evacuate I would not have been able to put in place my SEP because I was just too tired. It was not just me who felt like this, my other crew members felt exhausted too and have completed their own CHIRP forms. If we are rostered duties this long, then we should only work one way or night stop.

CHIRP Comment: CHIRP has received a number of reports from more than one operator relating to this particular route.

All the duties reported have been within the relevant operator's Approved FTL Scheme. In spite of this the cabin crew involved have reported that they felt extremely tired.

The reports have been forwarded to the CAA to permit other factors, such as roster sequencing and

extending of duties through the exercising of discretion, to be investigated.

Turning to the reporter's comment that they would be too tired should an emergency situation arise. Studies have shown that should a tired person be involved in an emergency situation the surge of adrenalin will normally be sufficient for them to act accordingly.

TURBULENCE AT THE REAR OF THE A/C

Report Text: I was at the rear of the aircraft about to commence the drinks service. Having set up the trolley we hit significant turbulence which led us to dismantle the trolley and strap into our seats. We informed the In Charge that we would wait until turbulence subsided before continuing. The In Charge told the Captain that we were strapped in and asked if he wanted to switch the seat belt signs on. He said, "No, he didn't think it was necessary".

Things seemed to calm down so we again tried to set-up the trolley only to hit turbulence again. The In Charge asked the Captain a further two times to switch the signs on as in their opinion it was very bumpy at the rear and they were concerned about the safety of crew and passengers. The Captain refused. We used our common sense and stayed strapped-in until we deemed it safe to continue.

Once we had landed the In Charge calmly asked the Captain why he hadn't switched the seat belt signs on when they had voiced their concerns to him. He stated that he was the Captain and he didn't think the level of turbulence was significant enough to warrant the signs being on. He called it MODERATE turbulence. He said that he travelled at the back of the aircraft enough times to judge when the seat belt signs needed to be switched on.

CHIRP Comment: JAR-OPS 1.1000 (b) permits the In Charge to act in conditions of turbulence as follows: "During turbulence, in the absence of any instructions from the flight crew, the senior cabin crew member shall be entitled to discontinue non-safety related duties and advise the flight crew of the level of turbulence being experienced and the need for the fasten seat belt signs to be switched on. This should be followed by the cabin crew securing the passenger cabin and other applicable areas."

It is unusual for an aircraft commander not to accept the advice of the In Charge regarding turbulence, since to do so could result in the aircraft commander/operator incurring a potential liability for a subsequent passenger accident/injury as, in the situation described, passengers may be reluctant to remain seated without the Seat Belts sign being ON.

BACK ISSUES

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