

CABIN CREW FEEDBACK

No: 2

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EDITORIAL

UPDATE ON CABIN CREW PROGRAMME

The initial response to the Cabin Crew confidential reporting trial has been very encouraging. The variety of safety-issues that have been raised in the first three months can be judged by the content of this issue of CABIN CREW FEEDBACK.

Only a proportion of the reports received are published both for reasons of space and because some reports are not suitable for publication due to the consideration of confidentiality.

Your continued support for the Programme is appreciated.

SPREADING THE WORD

We have printed Cabin Crew Report Forms on the back of the Flight Crew Report Forms that are being distributed with the October issue of the main FEEDBACK newsletter, which is circulated to all UK-Licensed Pilots, and have asked Flight Crew to pass them to any of your colleagues who might not yet be aware of the confidential reporting process for Cabin Crew.

REPORTS

HARNES SECURITY

My aircraft was on finals for AAA. Cabin lighting dimmed. Upon being instructed to take my seat by the Cabin Crew In-charge, I took my crew position in preparation for landing. As I tightened my harness the shoulder straps pulled away from the wall. I informed my Senior Crew member that I was moving to a pax seat for the landing. Fortunately the pax seat nearest the door was free. After landing I checked the harness. The 4" bolt located in the rear wardrobe had worked free of one of the two locating holes, allowing the shoulder straps to slip free. On searching the wardrobe I could find no nut loose in the base of the wardrobe, leading me to wonder if the bolt had ever been properly secured!

This report emphasises the importance of completing a thorough safety check of your harness. Has anything similar happened to you?

BLOCKED EMERGENCY EXITS

As part of regular service pattern, my company sets up trolleys with pre-take off drinks. These are positioned in front of some emergency exits.

Should the aircraft boarding for any reason need to discontinue and an emergency evacuation take place three main exits are blocked by these trolleys. If the aircraft suffers a fire etc the passengers may not be able to use the original entry points and may need to exit via any available exit. If the trolley is moved in a hurry, the glass could fall, break and then damage feet or emergency slides in a subsequent evacuation.

This report highlights an important safety issue that can easily be overlooked. Does it happen within your Company? If so, we would be interested to know.

General guidelines for this type of safety issue are given in CAP 360 Air Operators' Certificates - Notices to AOC Holders Part One, Chapter 6, Page 24, which states:

Operators must ensure that at any time the aircraft is on the ground provision for the safe and rapid evacuation of passengers in an emergency is maintained.

UNSTABLE TROLLEY

On a number of occasions I have been involved where items have fallen from the bar extension. Once the extension has been loaded with water bottles, tea/coffee pots, glasses (plastic) ice etc, we then have to negotiate a steep plastic joining strip between the aisle carpet and the galley floor. This is only possible one wheel at a time allowing the top of the cart to sway alarmingly. On occasion items have fallen from the trolley and landed on a passenger - they were not amused.

CHIRP contacted the company who are looking into the matter to see what they can do to prevent this happening in the future.

It is important to report this type of problem promptly, particularly if it is related to a new type of aircraft entering service, to ensure that the matter is investigated.

TEMPERATURE ON BOARD

I was on board an a/c for the journey from AAA to BBB. The temperature on board was stifling and many passengers were close to fainting. Crew had recorded the temperature at 30°C at the front of the a/c and 34°C at the rear.

A Cabin Crew Safety Newsletter

from the Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme

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The problem was brought to the attention of the Company, who were aware of the difficulties being experienced.

The Company introduced a procedure to attach ground-conditioning units to keep the aircraft cool on the ground and to also assist in maintaining a more comfortable temperature in the air.

An enquiry was also made to CAA (SRG) as to what requirements existed in relation to minimum/maximum cabin temperature limits. Their reply is as follows:

There are no specific Airworthiness Requirements covering cabin Min/Max temperature. However, potential system failures of the Environmental Control System (ECS) are identified and addressed during the aircraft certification process and classified according to the severity of the failure, i.e. Hazardous, Catastrophic etc.

If during the Systems Safety Assessment (SSA) process there are failure modes identified which may result in abnormally high cabin temperatures, then either design solutions are found or appropriate emergency procedures drafted into the Aircraft Flight Manual (AFM) to ensure the situation is safely addressed if a failure occurs during flight.

SEP EQUIPMENT

Flight deck door was open. Captain removed axe from official stowage and placed on floor behind him. Cabin crewmember questioned his reason as passengers could see the axe. Captain advised it was to protect himself - after the hi-jack problems in the USA. It was pointed out that the axe was behind him and he could be hit from behind before he knew it. The Captain agreed. The cabin crewmember suggested the axe was put back into its official stowage. The Captain would not put the axe back but moved it to his side console - again not in an official stowage and loose. This practice is very dangerous.

Any loose article on a flight deck is potentially dangerous, as it may move about, particularly in turbulence, and could foul the controls. Also, if emergency equipment is out of its normal stowage other crewmembers may not be able to locate it in the event of an emergency.

DEADHEADING OR DEAD-TIRED

Following a stopover on the East Coast of the USA, we reported at 1900 hrs local (0100 UTC). The first two sectors were to two European destinations followed by a flight to AAA (UK).

The flight was over four hours late leaving and we were notified by company that we were required to operate the third sector, as they were calling this final sector 'deadheading'. However, although we had no passengers other than the two flight deck crewmembers who had operated the first sector (they were replaced), as we were the only operating crew, this was not deadheading.

We were extremely tired, over-tired by the time we arrived at our UK base, having been on duty for more than 16 hours and 30 minutes continuous duty. Several crewmembers had to

leave their cars and phone relatives to collect them due to their extreme fatigue.

CAA (SRG) provided the following comments:

Having no passengers on board does not mean that the sector is not counted as forming part of the flying duty period. 'Deadheading' (or positioning) as passengers can only be claimed when the crew are 'looked after' by at least one cabin crewmember and they are not required to take part in any activity associated with cabin safety or cabin service duties.

WHAT CONSTITUTES EXPERIENCED?

For this flight, the total number of cabin crewmembers was 10. The minimum required was eight. In addition, there were three supernumeraries.

Two supervisors and one crewmember were quite experienced and one other crewmember qualified as experienced (three months and one day).

The remaining crewmembers had less than three months experience; therefore only 50% of the crewmembers on this flight were experienced.

What constitutes 'experienced'?

Advice was sought from CAA (SRG) Cabin Services Department as to what, if any, requirements existed to qualify as 'experienced' and whether CAA (SRG) required a minimum number of crew members to be 'experienced'

CAA(SRG) responded as follows:

The following criteria are based on JAR-OPS 1:

The only cabin crewmember who needs to be experienced is the Senior Cabin Crew Member (SCCM), who needs at least one year operating experience, as well as a SCCM training course. Therefore in the example given, only one experienced out of the eight.

Supernumeraries are those carried in addition to the minimum number of required cabin crew - ie if the minimum required cabin crew complement is 10 then the supernumeraries are carried over and above this requirement.

Most operators have additional requirements in their Operations Manuals (OM), which are more restrictive than the above, and if so, operators are required to adhere to what is laid down in the OM. Additionally, it might be that the CAA might require additional OM requirements. On large aircraft there is a seniority structure- SCCM, Number 2, sometimes a Number 3 and then juniors. In cases where such a structure exists the individual operator will usually have some experience criteria for each level.

If you have been up-ranked and you feel anxious as to your competency or that of a colleague in the particular circumstances, you should inform the Captain of your concern.
