

CABIN CREW FEEDBACK

Issue No: 27

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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU REPORT TO CHIRP?

Following on from the 'Who Are We' theme back in CCFB 24, here is an explanation of what it is we do when a confidential cabin crew report is submitted.

When a report is received, the first thing we do is allocate a unique reference number which will then allow the reporter to quote this on any correspondence or telephone conversations they have with the **CHIRP** office. Once the report text is entered into our secure database - no personal details are recorded - we then look at the report to see if it raises a safety-related issue that **CHIRP** are able to assist with. If the matter relates to personality clashes, industrial relations or terms & conditions, the reporter is advised that **CHIRP** are unable to assist and the report is closed. If the report has been received in the mail the reporter's personal details and report are returned to them. If the report is received electronically their details are destroyed or shredded.

If, however, the report is something that **CHIRP** are able to assist with, an acknowledgment letter/e-mail is sent advising the reporter of their unique reference number (mentioned above) and the proposed action that can be taken. Once the reporter's agreement has been received, and if their report relates to a general issue, the matter will then be raised with the reporter's company. If the report relates to something more specific and the reporter's identity could be inferred, the best course of action will be discussed with the reporter in the first instance. This could be for the reporter to raise their concerns directly with their company or to contact the company's **CHIRP** representative - this is often the best course of action as it permits the company to have all the information required to enable it to look into the matter in more detail. If **CHIRP** contacts the company on the reporter's behalf, all identifying information will be removed such as date, aircraft location, aircraft type, time, etc. If further advice is required the report text is reviewed by the **CHIRP** Cabin Crew Advisory Board, again with the reporter's permission. The Board will then determine the best course of action and/or recommend whether the report is published in CABIN CREW FEEDBACK to 'spread the word' or provide a 'lesson learned' for fellow cabin crew. **CHIRP** also has the ability to raise the matter directly with the CAA, or other third-parties. Once **CHIRP** has done all that they are able, the reporter is notified of the outcome of their report either by e-mail or letter, depending on how the report was submitted and their personal details are either destroyed or returned.

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REPORTS

COMPANY MERGER - CONFUSING SOPs

Report Text: Following a company merger it was decided to change our emergency equipment SOPs and we received training in the new SOPs. One month later our recurrent (Co A) SEP training started and in the exams we had to use the old emergency equipment SOPs rather than the new equipment SOPs that we had just learned. This was the start of some confusion with the crew, having to learn new equipment SOPs only to go into recurrent SEP training and do the old ones. We were then issued a pre-course study book for the new SOPs, which contained all the new operating procedures which do not become operational until later this year.

The (3 day) conversion courses in the new SOPs started at the beginning of the year but as soon as the course was completed the crew were told to forget everything until they are introduced later in the year! This is where crewmembers are getting very confused. We have had to learn one set of SEPs then start again learning the new only to have to revert back to our existing SEPs. Many crew members have expressed concern having to learn a new SEP let alone trying to remember the old SEPs straight after it. I think my concerns and those of the other crew are very valid.

Why have the company trained crew so early causing confusion, having to go back and forth with two SOPs?

CHIRP Comment: The operator concerned has tried to manage the merger with the least amount of disruption as possible. Logistically, with the number of cabin crew

A Cabin Crew Safety Newsletter

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

involved, the training had to commence at the time quoted to permit all crew to be trained in the new SEPs prior to the planned date for their introduction. Unfortunately, for some crew members, this was several months prior to the planned change. As a result of this some crew also had to complete their recurrent SEP training. The training was approved by the CAA.

The operator plans to refresh the training previously given to cabin crew at the time of implementing the new SOPs.

TWISTED EXTENSION BELTS

Report Text: I am a Captain and was travelling as a passenger on a domestic flight with my baby. When attempting to attach the extension seat belt around my child I could not fasten the belt without either the belt being twisted or the release lever pressing into the baby's stomach with the adjustable part of the belt rather inaccessible, being under the buckle and belt.

I drew this problem to the attention of a member of the crew who dismissed my concerns, stating that the belt was normal. I insisted that the belt be changed and the crewmember returned with another, stating that it was the same as the first. I took a look at the belt and this one had the buckle attached the correct way around. During a quiet part of the flight I relayed my concern to the In Charge who, having looked through their supply of extension belts returned with the comment that they had a mixture of buckles, both ways round, that this was quite normal and stated that with the release lever under the belt, small children could not play with the buckle and inadvertently release the belt. I have since had a look at the extension seat belts on a few aircraft that I have operated and it looked like my company had a similar problem. It then became apparent that the offending belts simply needed one of the loose ends to be passed through the small extension loop et voila (problem solved). I have spoken to our company's cabin crew and know they do not check the orientation of the extension buckle when handing out belts for use with infants and I think the reaction of the crew from the other airline speaks for itself. I think CHIRP is the best way I can raise awareness among cabin crew.

CHIRP Comment: Were you aware of this problem with extension belts? It might be worth checking the next time you distribute infant extension belts to make sure the lever to release the buckle is outward facing, without having to twist the belt.

PORTABLE EQUIPMENT LOCATIONS

Report Text: My concerns are that the location of Portable Equipment on our different aircraft types is extremely complicated and confusing.

We have four separate aircraft configurations to learn, and there is no consistency. For example on one of our B###, fire extinguishers are sometimes on a bulkhead, sometimes outboard of jump seats, sometimes in side stowage's. The problem is exacerbated by our rank system. As junior cabin crew only generally work in Economy, and more senior cabin crew usually only work in the premium cabins, crew are very rarely in a position to gain a true understanding of the location of

equipment rather than just on a diagram in the manual. Should I happen to be standing in a different cabin in an emergency situation, I am not confident that I or many of my fellow crew would be able to quickly locate a fire extinguisher or portable oxygen, particularly in the dark. Would it not be simpler and safer for the company to create a standardised door station? So that basic equipment is always in the same place, no matter which door you are at?

CHIRP Comment: In an ideal world there would be a standard emergency equipment layout at each door, however this is not always possible due to the same facilities not being available for stowage at each door due to the design of the aircraft.

Aircraft certification and operational requirements also determine the location of equipment e.g. accessible from the seated position, adjacent to the crew station, etc. Operators have to locate the equipment to comply with the regulations first and then make best use of the stowages available. When specifying an aircraft, after ensuring that the quantity and location of emergency equipment complies with the aviation requirements, the operator should attempt to standardise the locations across the fleet. However, it may be the case that pre-installed stowages are not identical.

One option would be for the In Charge, at the pre-flight briefing, to highlight the differences on the aircraft type, to permit crew the opportunity to refresh themselves in respect of locations.

This report was forwarded to the operator who understood the reporter's concerns. The operator also recommended that even though crew may work in one cabin due to their seniority, they could use some of the time available on a flight to walk around the aircraft to familiarise themselves with the location of all equipment. The operator also advised CHIRP that a fire extinguisher and at least two oxygen cylinders are located in each exit area.

ABP SUITABILITY

Report Text: Travelling as a passenger, I chose an over-wing exit seat and was disturbed to notice that the passenger on the other side of the aircraft was extremely overweight (in excess of 25 stone by my estimation). They did not look like they would actually fit through the exit let alone be able to operate and use the exit in an appropriately expedient manner.

This is not the first time I have noticed this particular carrier allowing passengers who, while they may be able to walk unaided, are stretching the definition of who would be allowed to sit in these exit seats (previously I have witnessed elderly pax etc in these seats).

Perhaps all carriers should be forced to specifically issue exit row seats to more appropriate passengers. In an evacuation scenario having passengers able to move fast and fit enough to operate the hatches in these seats could well make the difference between lives being lost or not.

CHIRP Comment: It is often difficult and highly embarrassing for cabin crew to determine whether someone is obese or not and to determine the

suitability of an ABP. To assist their cabin crew, a number of operators apply the rule that if a passenger is in need of an extension belt, they are not permitted to sit by an emergency exit. One reason could be the potential trip hazard in an emergency, associated with the extension belt trailing on the floor once released.

In this case, the report was forwarded to the operator concerned for their information. As a result, a memo was issued to all cabin crew reminding them of the legal/safe requirements for all ABPs. The operator was also in the process of introducing a new procedure where cabin crew would specifically speak with exit-row passengers to make them aware of the actions required, and confirm that they were able to execute the instructions on the safety card.

MEGAPHONE LOCATIONS

Report Text: On our B### fleet, there are three megaphones on the aircraft and these now all go out the left side of the aircraft in an evacuation. This has been raised to the company, but has been ignored and remains unchanged (prior to the change, two megaphones were taken off the left side and one off the right side, meaning that there was a megaphone for crowd control on both sides).

CHIRP Comment: This matter was raised with the operator who advised that the reporter was correct, in that three megaphones were carried and in a pre-planned emergency the crew members responsible for removing a megaphone do sit on the left side of the aircraft.

The operator has agreed to look into the reporter's concerns and to re-designate a crew member's responsibility for the megaphone which will mean they will evacuate with it on the right side.

APPROVED STOWAGE?

Report Text: Recently, I saw that another crew member place their crew bag in the fireproof gash cart, which is not designed to withhold such weight, and therefore making it a safety issue, as the gash cart might open during landing and cause injury to both crew and passengers.

CHIRP Comment: This report was forwarded to the operator concerned for their information. The operator then issued a memo to all cabin crew reminding them of the legal/safe stowage requirements for crew bags.

U/S EVACUATION ALARM (1)

Report Text: One of our aircraft has an allowable defect, this renders the EVAC system inoperable. The EVAC alarm forms an integral part of the company taught evacuation drill. The procedure explained by the In Charge was that if you feel a situation warrants an evacuation, call the flight crew via the interphone. As we all know an evacuation requires split second decisions, to have an inoperable EVAC alarm is not acceptable.

CHIRP Comment: An EVAC alarm is an optional safety system which may be installed when an aeroplane is built. As a result, an aircraft can be despatched with an

inoperable EVAC alarm, provided the crew are aware of what alternate procedures will be used in its place.

U/S EVACUATION ALARM (2)

Report Text: On arrival on stand we were told that our evacuation alarm system was unserviceable, and were briefed on alternative measures. On discussion with the Captain he informed me that it would be 120 days before it was fixed! I was concerned as to the possibility of evacuating without the alarm, how might pax react?

I can not believe that the CAA deems that this is not an issue up to 120 days, when it quite clearly could be!

I do not think that this is acceptable, and was certainly not happy about departing with it u/s. It is not the only aircraft flying about with an EVAC alarm u/s and personally I think that it should be fixed immediately not after 120 days!

CHIRP Comment: Various system defects are graded in terms of their effect on aircraft safety: Class A must be fixed before further flight, B fixed within 3 days, C fixed within 10 days and D fixed within 120 days. These limits are an industry norm and are agreed with the CAA when they approve the company's MEL for the aircraft.

In this case, with regard to the time established for repair (120 days), this refers to the maximum period that the company has deemed for this (optional) system to remain inoperative from the time it was reported. The defect may be fixed at any time during the intervening period. The rules governing unserviceability are laid out in the front of the Minimum Equipment List (MEL) held in the flight deck library.

MISUSE OF FASTEN SEATBELT SIGNS

Report Text: The flight was a 40 minute shuttle and the Captain announced that he would be leaving the seat belt signs on because it was a short flight. I asked the In Charge if they had heard this as we wouldn't be able to serve hot drinks with the seat belt sign on. The In Charge told me the sign was only on because the flight was short and not turbulent and that we should still serve hot drinks.

As far as I was aware no hot drinks should be served if the seat belt signs are on irrespective of the reason for the signs.

CHIRP Comment: This report is an excellent example of the importance of effective liaison between flight crew and cabin crew.

This report was raised with the operator concerned for clarification who confirmed that in the case reported there would be no reason why hot drinks could not be served. However, this appeared to be more of a case of not communicating the intention to keep the seat belt signs ON and the level of cabin service that could be provided, including serving hot drinks.

Whilst the flight crew's intentions were probably to assist the cabin crew in providing a speedy service without passengers moving around the cabin, as there was no turbulence present, passengers could be inclined to ignore the signs - which would not only negate their purpose in this instance, but could lead to the signs being ignored should turbulence be expected.

CHIRP

CABIN CREW REPORT FORM

CHIRP is totally independent of the Civil Aviation Authority and any Airline

Name: <input type="checkbox"/> Indicates Mandatory Fields	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your personal details are required only to enable us to contact you for further details about any part of your report. Please do not submit anonymous reports. 2. On closing, this Report Form will be returned to you. NO RECORD OF YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS WILL BE KEPT 3. CHIRP is a reporting programme for safety-related issues. We regret we are unable to accept reports that relate to industrial relations issues.
Address: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Post Code <input type="checkbox"/> Tel: <input type="checkbox"/>	
e-mail: <input type="checkbox"/>	

It is **CHIRP** policy to acknowledge a report on receipt and then to provide a comprehensive closing response, if required. If you do not require a closing response please tick the box:

No. I do not require a response from **CHIRP**

PLEASE COMPLETE RELEVANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE EVENT/SITUATION

YOURSELF - CREW POSITION	THE FLIGHT/EVENT	CABIN ACTIVITY
CABIN CREW IN-CHARGE <input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR CABIN CREW <input type="checkbox"/> CABIN CREW <input type="checkbox"/> SUPERNUMERARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:	DATE OF INCIDENT TIME LOCAL/GMT AIRCRAFT LOCATION	BOARDING <input type="checkbox"/> INFLIGHT SERVICE <input type="checkbox"/> DISEMBARKING <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
EXPERIENCE/QUALIFICATION	THE AIRCRAFT	FLIGHT PHASE
TOTAL YEARS YEARS WITH CURRENT AIRLINE	TYPE/SERIES	PRE-DEPARTURE <input type="checkbox"/> TAXI <input type="checkbox"/>
CURRENT AIRCRAFT TYPES QUALIFIED ON:	NUMBER OF CABIN CREW	TAKE-OFF/CLIMB <input type="checkbox"/> DESCENT/LANDING <input type="checkbox"/>
1. 2. 3.	NUMBER OF PAX ON BOARD	STAND/GATE ARRIVAL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
PASSENGER(S)/INJURY(IES)	NUMBER OF EXITS	TYPE OF OPERATION
PASSENGER(S) INVOLVED? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	WEATHER (IF RELEVANT)	SCHEDULED <input type="checkbox"/> CHARTER <input type="checkbox"/>
INJURY TO PASSENGER <input type="checkbox"/> INJURY TO CREW	TURBULENCE <input type="checkbox"/> THUNDERSTORM <input type="checkbox"/>	CORPORATE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
THE COMPANY	OTHER:	My MAIN POINTS ARE:
NAME OF COMPANY:	REPORT TOPIC / MY REPORT RELATES TO:	A:
		B:
		C:

DESCRIPTION OF EVENT

Your narrative will be reviewed by a member of the **CHIRP** staff who will remove all information such as dates/locations/names that might identify you. Bear in mind the following topics when preparing your narrative:

Chain of events • Communication • Decision Making • Equipment • Situational Awareness • Weather • Task Allocation • Teamwork • Training

continue on a separate piece of paper, if necessary

PLEASE PLACE THE COMPLETED REPORT FORM, WITH ADDITIONAL PAGES IF REQUIRED, IN A SEALED ENVELOPE (no stamp required) AND SEND TO:

CHIRP • FREEPOST (G13439) • Building Y20E • Room G15 • Cody Technology Park • Ively Road • Farnborough • GU14 0BR • UK

Confidential Tel (24 hrs): +44 (0) 1252 395013 or **Freefone** (UK only) 0800 214645 and Confidential Fax: +44 (0) 1252 394290

Report forms are also available on the **CHIRP** website: www.chirp.co.uk