

# CABIN CREW FEEDBACK

Issue No: 29

Autumn 2008

Number of Reports Received Since Last Issue: 62

**Topics Have Included:**

Passengers - Intoxicated/Smoking  
Pressure to Operate Whilst Ill  
Pre-flight Duties  
Post-flight Duties  
Hot Drinks Service - Not From Trolley  
New Trip Patterns

## REPORTS

### INOPERATIVE DOOR WARNING INDICATOR

**Report Text:** We operated two sectors on a ### aircraft (narrow body). The aircraft had already flown that day and the pilots informed us that due to some problems with the flaps we would fly at a lower altitude and much slower than we normally do.

We also had a problem with D#R, which is where I was sitting and it was my responsibility. The pilots said that this door must not be touched because they had no warning in the flight deck to show if it was open or closed correctly. It was assumed that the door was closed properly with a visual check. I didn't feel safe knowing that my door was closed correctly by assumption.

**CHIRP Comment:** The flap defect and the door indication fault were unconnected.

The Minimum Equipment List (MEL) permits the aircraft to operate safely and legally with some technical defects (the Captain would not have accepted the aircraft otherwise). Each defect listed in the MEL has a time limit for continued operation before the defect must be rectified. In the case of both of these defects, continued operation was permitted for a maximum of 3 days; however, in a case where there is a significant operating limitation, it is highly likely that the engineering department would ensure that the defect is rectified at the earliest opportunity, probably at the end of the flying day if spare parts are available.

With regard to the door indication defect, the Captain would have confirmed that the door had been physically closed by an individual trained/approved to do so. The door on this aircraft and many other aircraft types is a 'plug type' design in which the door locks into the aircraft structure from the inside (similar to the way the plug fits in a bath outlet to stop the water draining

away). Once confirmed closed, this design is entirely safe. Also, with the door in the closed position, when the aircraft is airborne, the difference in air pressure between that in the cabin and the outside ambient air pressure applies a force of several tonnes on all doors.

### AIRCRAFT DESPATCHED WITH UNSERVICEABLE INTERPHONES

**Report Text:** I worked number # on this flight to AAA (Africa). This position, along with number #, are the only crew seats that view the mid and rear passenger cabins as well as the wing and engines. During boarding at BBB (UK), we were informed by the In Charge that the interphones at Door # were unserviceable. My colleague and I who were sitting at these stations objected and felt it was unsafe to go without them working. The Captain was keen to get going and said we could just use our megaphones if we had to - there are none at these stations. We were a bit delayed so an engineer was able to reset the system and they worked briefly. The interphones again failed during flight and we again asked for them to be looked at on the ground in AAA, but I feel that commercial importance was the priority on the day so we operated the return sector to the UK with them U/S.

I did state to the In Charge and the Captain how unsafe this seemed to the crew working at these stations but was advised that these were a ten-day ADD (Aircraft Deferred Defect) and the aircraft could go for ten days with the problem. I'd just like to know how this can be the case as it goes against all our training and procedures.

**Lessons Learned:** I can only emphasise the importance of all areas of the aircraft being able to contact the other. Anything could have happened at Door # and we would have not been able to contact the flight crew or In Charge.

**CHIRP Comment:** An aircraft may be despatched with an unserviceable interphone system provided alternate, normal and emergency procedures are established and used and that the PA system is operative. The ability to communicate with the flight crew is imperative and the Minimum Equipment List (MEL) will normally require the Captain and the In Charge to agree on an alternative procedure and for the In Charge to brief the crew. As noted by the reporter, in this particular case the MEL permitted operating for ten days.

MEL limitations/procedures may vary for smaller aircraft and single cabin crew operations; these will be detailed in the operator's MEL document for the aircraft type.

A Cabin Crew Safety Newsletter

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

If the problem appears to be with a handset, as opposed to the PA system, it might be worth attempting to swap handsets as a short term solution.

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### AVAILABILITY OF SAFETY NOTICES

**Report Text:** During the pre-flight briefing the In Charge posed the question to the cabin crew, "Can anyone tell me one of the recent Safety Notices that have been issued?" No one could answer. The In Charge then asked if anyone knew of "ANY Safety Notices in the crew room at the moment". One crew member could recall a Safety Notice that had been produced two weeks previously. During the safety briefing the In Charge went on to talk to the crew about aircraft specifics and differences for that aircraft type, which were all answered correctly.

The company have recently stopped issuing crew with their own personal copy of Safety Notices and they do not have them available for crew to look at in their own time via the company website. The only place to view them is in the crew room, where you get five minutes after report time.

I also tried to look something up in the Safety Manual in the crew room, to discover that there were none there! Crew are not obliged to carry them on their person, but surely the company are obliged to keep one in the crew room in case of any queries, before, during or after a pre flight briefing?

**CHIRP Comment:** SEP Manuals and Safety Notices may be provided in hard (paper) copy or electronically. There are significant advantages to electronic copy; safety data can be updated almost immediately, the issue of documentation can be better controlled and it is more cost effective. Amendment of hard copy is notoriously difficult to monitor and is subject to a large degree of error.

However, the adjustment to using electronic copy can be difficult and operators should provide the necessary instruction, training and hardware to support crew.

Whatever the process crew must be able to access up-to-date safety information at any time - quickly, easily and in a format where information can be easily understood and digested. If manuals are only available on CD or online there should be the capability for crews to have ready access to the information both in the crew room and onboard the aircraft.

This report was forwarded to the operator concerned for their information.

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### EXIT SIGN BLOCKED OFF WITH TAPE

**Report Text:** During our take off run my colleague and I in the premium cabin noticed that all signage for the left hand door had been duct taped over. There was no "Exit" sign on the door. After we had climbed and were in the cruise, we phoned the In Charge and explained our concern and our findings. They checked the Tech Log and found nothing.

The flight crew were advised and sent a message back to Base seeking more information. No response was received during the flight and the flight crew asked us to discreetly peel the tape off. The overhead exit signs

were really well stuck on with a similar coloured duct tape to the shroud of the door. Under the first layer, we came across a second layer of black duct tape covering the signage. This was reported to the flight crew and they advised us to do nothing further and engineering in BBB would take a further look. Our fear was that the exit was unusable and that the paperwork had not been completed. The flight crew did learn that the aircraft had just been released from maintenance but it still didn't explain why an exit had been blocked off so well with two layers of tape.

The flight crew and In Charge advised us not to make the premium passengers aware but to be conscious ourselves of the fact that in an emergency there may be a problem with the door.

Our In Charge believed that we should have spotted it much sooner on the ground but, the tape blended in so well that it was difficult to notice straightaway. In hindsight perhaps we should have been more observant but with the pressure to prepare the aircraft for pax boarding and the time allocated for security and SEP checks, time was not on our side.

On arrival at BBB the engineer checked the door and found everything to be working as needed and he removed the tape. I am annoyed that the aircraft had been released back into service like this and of course annoyed with ourselves for not having noticed the blocked off exit.

**Lessons Learned:** Look for the unknown. Always question and do not accept the answer given unless it is backed up from elsewhere. We felt that if we had have removed the tape in-flight and subsequently on another sector there had been a need to use the door that we could have prevented the safe evacuation of passengers and colleagues if the door was indeed faulty.

**CHIRP Comment:** This report contains a good Human Factors lesson showing how easy it is to 'see' what you expect and miss something significant. Numerous people are involved in the safety process and from time to time errors and omissions can occur. It highlights the importance of methodically checking your area of responsibility and remaining vigilant for any irregularities throughout the aircraft.

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### REAR PAX UNABLE TO SEE SAFETY DEMO

**Report Text:** With our three-crew operation the passengers at the rear of the aircraft cannot see the demo, the In Charge does the demo at D1, another crew member does the demo at the divider and the other crew member is reading the demo in the rear galley. Passengers regularly say they cannot see the demo because the crew member is so far down the cabin, we were advised to walk the demo where the crew member doing the demo at the divider would walk down the cabin half-way and do it again, this does not happen. I'm not sure why, we were told it took too long, but I don't think it does. The other alternative is to use the pre-recorded announcement (PRA) and then the other crew member could stand say six or seven rows from the back and do the demo, that way all pax can see the

safety demo and the rear doors could still be accessed should it be necessary.

I did actually walk the demo the other day and it didn't take that long to do. Where safety is concerned I cut no corners.

**CHIRP** Comment: This matter was raised with the operator, who confirmed that they were aware of the reporter's concerns. The operator was in the process of drafting an amendment to the relevant SEP manual to highlight the benefits of using the pre-recorded safety briefing whenever available and to revise the crew positions for manual demonstrations; crew members will be reminded that any passengers unable see the demonstration must be personally briefed.

This report highlights the need for the safety demonstration to be visible to all passengers. Many operators use videos for safety demonstrations; however, if the video equipment fails, crew members should remember that certain cabin configurations may prevent passengers in some seats/rows from being able to see a "manual" demonstration. Crew members who carry out manual demos every day are familiar with those rows/seats which have limited visibility, and should manoeuvre themselves as necessary to be visible to all passengers.

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### PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY?

**Report Text:** I am concerned that crew regularly sit on their jump-seats reading papers, legs crossed - it scares me. At my previous airline we were told to sit on our hands that way we couldn't do anything like that. Perhaps I'm old fashioned but I seriously think a crew notice needs issuing, can you assist me? I always explain to the crew how important it is to be vigilant on take off and landing and if anything happens - sitting with their legs crossed would probably result in injury.

**CHIRP** Comment: A copy of this report was forwarded to the operator concerned. The operator has confirmed that a review of all training given to flight and cabin crew regarding planned versus unplanned emergencies is currently being undertaken, along with additional guidance on the correct cabin crew seating position during take off and landing. A reminder has also been issued to crew members of the importance of the 'silent review' during the critical phases of flight.

Critical phases of flight include take-off and landing, during which time cabin crew must be fully prepared to undertake immediate and appropriate action in the event of an emergency. This preparation includes being fully alert to conditions inside and outside the aircraft and minimising risk of injury to themselves by adopting the correct position when seated with harness securely fastened. At this time the professional demeanour of the cabin crew is likely to instil passenger confidence and subsequent compliance should an emergency occur.

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### INCORRECT SAFETY INFORMATION ON PASSENGER SAFETY CARDS

**Report Text:** My company operates two different types of floor level exit locator lights on this aircraft type (narrow

body) aircraft, there are currently two versions of the safety card for this aircraft because of the two types of lights. On one particular aircraft, it has the wrong type of safety card loaded in 50% of the seat pockets and demo kits.

I informed the In Charge on each occasion that I have operated on this aircraft that the wrong safety cards were loaded and nothing was done to rectify this situation. I also asked the flight crew to enter this into the Tech Log but they refused as they did not see it as problem.

This aircraft is still in service with the incorrect safety cards.

**CHIRP** Comment: This report was forwarded to the operator concerned, who conducted an internal investigation.

Operators are required to provide one safety card per passenger, which must contain correct information for the particular aircraft. Passengers are required to be briefed on the location and use of floor proximity escape path markings as part of the pre-flight briefing, regardless of whether this information is included on the safety card or not. In a case such as this, the operator should ensure that the difference is included in the pre-flight safety briefing. The reporter was correct to bring this matter to the attention of the Captain.

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### BACK ISSUES

Back issues of CABIN CREW FEEDBACK are available on our website: [www.chirp.co.uk](http://www.chirp.co.uk)

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### SCHEDULING AGREEMENTS AND FTLs

Recently we have received a number of reports in which crew have felt that they have been exposed to potentially fatiguing duties as a result of having been required to operate for longer than that stated in a Scheduling Agreement.

A Scheduling Agreement is an industrial relations agreement drawn-up between the company and the relevant employee representative body (usually the cabin crew union).

A company's Flight Time Limitations (FTL) Scheme, determines whether a duty/roster sequence is acceptable and is approved by the CAA.

It should be noted that almost invariably, a Scheduling Agreement is more restrictive than the FTL Scheme.

The **CHIRP** Programme's remit is limited to safety-related issues. Difficulties relating to Scheduling Agreements should be referred to the employee representative associations.

# CHIRP

## CABIN CREW REPORT FORM

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

Name: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> <span style="float: right;">▲ Indicates Mandatory Fields</span>	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. <b>NO RECORD OF YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS WILL BE KEPT</b> 3. <b>CHIRP</b> is a reporting programme for safety-related issues. We regret we are unable to accept reports that relate to industrial relations issues.
Address: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	
Post Code <input style="width: 30%;" type="text"/> Tel: <input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>	
e-mail: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	

It is <b>CHIRP</b> 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 <b>CHIRP</b> <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>
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**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 AIRCRAFT LOCATION	BOARDING <input type="checkbox"/> INFLIGHT SERVICE <input type="checkbox"/> DISEMBARKING <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
<b>EXPERIENCE/QUALIFICATION</b> TOTAL YEARS      YEARS WITH CURRENT AIRLINE	<b>THE AIRCRAFT</b> TYPE/SERIES NUMBER OF CABIN CREW NUMBER OF PAX ON BOARD	<b>FLIGHT PHASE</b> PRE-DEPARTURE <input type="checkbox"/> TAXI <input type="checkbox"/> TAKE-OFF/CLIMB <input type="checkbox"/> DESCENT/LANDING <input type="checkbox"/> STAND/GATE ARRIVAL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
<b>CURRENT AIRCRAFT TYPES QUALIFIED ON:</b> 1.      2.      3.	NUMBER OF EXITS	<b>TYPE OF OPERATION</b> SCHEDULED <input type="checkbox"/> CHARTER <input type="checkbox"/> CORPORATE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
<b>PASSENGER(S)/INJURY(IES)</b> PASSENGER(S) INVOLVED? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> INJURY TO PASSENGER <input type="checkbox"/> INJURY TO CREW	<b>WEATHER (IF RELEVANT)</b> TURBULENCE <input type="checkbox"/> THUNDERSTORM <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:	<b>My MAIN POINTS ARE:</b> A: B: C:
<b>THE COMPANY</b> NAME OF COMPANY:	<b>REPORT TOPIC / MY REPORT RELATES TO:</b>	

**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](http://www.chirp.co.uk)