

CABIN CREW FEEDBACK

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EDITORIAL

REPORT FORMS

Some Companies have reported that cabin crewmembers have mistaken the CHIRP Report Form for a Company report.

As a reminder, CHIRP is confidential, independent and not associated with any Company scheme.

To avoid any confusion, we have amended the wording at the top of the Form, a copy of which is printed on the back of this issue.

ANONYMOUS REPORTS

We have received a number of anonymous reports, which we have been unable to act upon. The reason we require your personal details is solely for our own use. If we are unsure of any aspect of your report, we are able to contact you. Your details also permit us to let you know of any action taken in response to your report. Your personal details are always returned.

If you are unsure about the process, give us a call.

REPORTS

ICE ON THE WING

Outside it was dark but with sun rising. As I went to conduct the safety demonstration in the centre of the aircraft, I noticed ice on the left wing (right wing couldn't be seen because of lack of sun light). I informed the flight crew and we returned to the Stand. The flight crew were supportive and requested an engineer to look at the wing.

My concern is: the attitude of engineer was off-hand. He implied both the Captain's and my own observations were wrong and the aircraft had been de-iced properly. In fact, when made to de-ice aircraft again, he found ice on the wing!!!

The attitude of the engineer was questionable but is the method of de-icing also?

The Company has been notified of this report. Preventative de-/anti icing is a process that is subject to many variables; weather changes, holding times etc. If any ice is visible on the wing surfaces, report it to the flight crew, as this reporter did. The individual is to be commended.

CREW BREAKS

On this flight and all flights under three hours it is the supervisor's responsibility to allocate crew breaks on shorthaul. With a minimum of seven hours duty period, the reduction of cabin crew to the legal minimum (four), and the increase in in-flight service and turnaround duties, it is impossible to organise a crew meal break at any period without delaying passengers. The whole crew on the above flight didn't have time to eat or drink at all. The crew were becoming light-headed and faint, not to mention dehydrated. This is a regular occurrence on all the EU flights with four crew. The abolition of duty free and the reduction in crew complement to save on company revenue has been at the whole company's cabin crews' expense both mentally and physically. The company needs to replace the fifth crew member on board or allocate at least 15 minutes on turnaround without any duties.

We consulted the Company, which was aware of this issue, and is currently in the process of resolving the problem.

NOT ENOUGH CREW

The crew had stayed in a hotel at our departure airport prior to operating this flight. As we were leaving the hotel, one crewmember became unfit to fly due to illness. As we were already operating with minimum crew this left us with one below the legal minimum. At this time, two "off duty" crewmembers arrived at the hotel. They told us they had been drinking, as they were not due for duty until later the following day. The Captain then asked both these crew if they would operate the flight as we were one below the minimum. They both informed the Captain AGAIN that they had been drinking alcohol. The Captain advised them that this fact would be "overlooked". Both crew refused to

A CABIN CREW SAFETY NEWSLETTER

from the Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme

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You can also e-mail us at confidential@chirp.co.uk - Visit our website at www.chirp.co.uk

operate the flight. (We have a strict no alcohol rule prior to a duty).

Therefore, we were still illegal to operate this flight. (There are no crewmembers for this aircraft anywhere except from base). We, as crew were adamant that the flight could not depart with one below the minimum, however, nobody, including the Captain, seemed at all concerned by this.

Passengers were duly boarded, and the usual pressure was on to ensure the flight departed on time.

It was made clear to us that as there were 51 fewer passengers than a full load we were legal. This is not the case. Finally, somebody realised that we were in fact illegal. The passengers were told the aircraft was unserviceable and disembarked.

We were then advised that a business jet from base was bringing another crewmember to us. We were by this time running out of hours and would need to operate in discretion.

Having checked in at 1830 local, we were told by the Captain that we would have to be airborne by 2330 local otherwise we would be out of hours for this flight. We were advised that we MUST operate the flight even though it was known we would be using discretion, and our Operations Department passed on the message that our "lives would be made very difficult" if we refused.

Eventually, we departed at 2345 local, therefore, 15 minutes after our deadline. At our destination (Mediterranean), we were delayed on the ground and inbound to our original airport, our Captain said that we would divert if a direct approach into this airport was not possible. This was due to our flight crew being nearly out of discretion.

I am extremely concerned that little regard is given for the legality of flights, whether it be from flight crew or crewing and operations. The only thing that matters is that the flight goes on time. Had this flight been crewed by a less experienced crew, I feel sure it would have operated with less than the legal amount of crew. It seems this airline are always trying to cut corners or bend the rules, and seem to disregard the safety aspect.

CAA (SRG) has advised that JAR-OPS 1.990 permits an operator to despatch an aircraft in unforeseen circumstances with less than 'minimum crew', provided the passenger load has been reduced in accordance with procedures specified in their Operations Manual and that a report is submitted to the Authority after completion of the flight. The Authority has further commented that only a relatively few operators have applied for this dispensation to be agreed and included within their own Operations Manual.

CAN YOU REACH THAT?

On boarding the aircraft, cabin crew had started to prepare the galley for flight. The rear crew member couldn't move a box/catering canister from above the ovens as it was all bent out of shape and jammed. I tried to release it several times and as I pulled it free, it was very heavy and I dropped it on my ankle causing bleeding and swelling. This only happened because:

1. Box was over the ovens (over 6ft) and was loaded (as standard) with bottles of water and coffee pots. Far too heavy at that height.
2. All the catering equipment the airline owns is faulty, ill-fitting boxes due to lack of replacements.

If you have faulty/damaged catering equipment, these three points should help you in the future:

- ***Risk Assessment - should you be moving this item?***
- ***Does your Company have a procedure for reporting defective catering equipment?***
- ***Always report any accident you may be unfortunate enough to experience.***

SSSHHH! YOU'LL WAKE THE BABY

I advised the In Charge Cabin Crew that it was not correct SEP procedure to make up a bed on the floor of the aircraft for a baby to sleep on, and pointed out the safety risks involved in such an action. Nevertheless they proceeded to do this thereby taking responsibility for the matter.

Clear air turbulence can be, and is, encountered unexpectedly; this can cause possible injury to any passenger, hence the advice to wear seatbelts at all times when seated during flight. Babies need to be similarly secure, usually in a suitably restrained carrycot. In addition to cabin floors being cold, babies can be stood on or cause others to trip; lying babies on the floor is an altogether undesirable procedure.

RUSH, RUSH, RUSH!

(1)

The crew boarded the aircraft which arrived late from turnaround. Immediately cleaners finished, dispatcher requested passenger boarding. Denied, as security checks needed to be carried out.

Captain asked by In Charge Cabin Crew for 15 minutes, with seat belt signs on, prior to landing. Agreed and given. Air traffic control gave "straight in approach" which gave cabin crew five minutes instead of 15 minutes. A passenger refused to switch off computer immediately and continued typing and kept table out for computer stability. Flight deck meal trays were still in the flight deck. Cabin clearance time was minimal and

therefore extremely rushed. The flight deck door could not be opened due to new system, for tray clearance. Checks given to Captain approximately one minute prior to landing.

(2)

Pre-September 11 it was the habit of cabin crew to clear the flight deck (cups, food etc) at the start of the descent or certainly before seat belt signs came on. However, with the new door policy, top of descent is perhaps now not the best time if it is a two pilot operation: perhaps a Notice to give pilots and cabin crew a clear-up time e.g. pre-top of descent briefing? Expecting pilots to leave their seats as they start the descent to open the door for cabin crew is not the best time, however, cabin crew do need to check that the flight deck is clear.

Sound familiar? These reports were forwarded to the relevant Company for their information.

OVERSEAS SECURITY

On a trip to an overseas location (Africa), when leaving the country I was the first crew member to go through security check. A passenger bag followed my crew bag. The operator looking at the screen pointed to this bag, asking the (other) operator checking the passenger by body search, "Who's bag?" - Without looking she said "It's OK - it's crew bags coming through". I waited to ensure it was not one of our crew bags. Having reassured myself, I drew the attention of security that the bag in question did not belong to a crew member.

This report was brought to the attention of the Security Department for the airline concerned. They asked us to remind reporters to put any similar concerns about station security in Flight Crew Reports so that they come to the attention of the senior manager responsible for monitoring international security performance. The Security Department, in turn, will take the issue up with the station staff directly, using the details provided in a specific report to help remedy any deficiencies.

AT YOUR DISCRETION ... ?

We checked in at 2215 GMT for a flight to the Mediterranean. During the final preparations for the return flight we experienced a technical problem. We went to a hotel for a split duty rest period. The Voyage Report entry made by the Captain stated that we had three hours split duty rest and consequently our FDP could be extended by one and a half hours, when in fact, we had no more than an hour and a half at the hotel. When we queried it, we were told we were legal. Eventually, the aircraft was flown empty back to a UK maintenance base. On arriving back to UK, we wanted a

minimum rest period but the Captain wanted to get back home, so we only had six hours in a hotel. We were taken to Base by taxi. It is common within my company for flight crew to juggle hours.

A split duty rest period of between three and 10 hours permits the Flight Duty Period (FDP) to be extended by up to half the consecutive hours rest taken, but must not include the time allowed for immediate post flight duties and pre-flight duties; the time for these duties is as specified in the Company's FTL scheme but cannot be less than a total of 30 minutes. A split duty rest period of less than three hours permits no extension of the FDP.

Extended positioning duties following completion of an FDP away from base is not a flight safety issue, but must be taken into account in the following rest period.

Under JAR-OPS 1, the Company Cabin Safety Procedures Manual must contain a statement regarding the Approved Flight Time Limitations Scheme for cabin crew; this should contain advice on where to access the Company's FTL Scheme or who to talk to if the Scheme is not understood.

CREW OXYGEN

These were two identical incidents that occurred during two different sectors of one back-to-back duty. I reported the incident via the company's own safety-reporting system but have heard nothing. I checked with the SEP department who confirmed that I was correct but, as yet, nothing has been done, although they did say that they would include it in the annual SEP checks.

On the two different sectors a passenger became ill and the crew dealing with the situation used my crew oxygen bottle. After the first incident I pointed out that the oxygen on this particular aircraft was via the ring main system and there are no spare bottles on board to replace my bottle. They did exactly the same thing on the subsequent sector, using my bottle again.

In the event of a decompression this would leave the crew one down and I would have to be in a passenger seat. According to the manual I believe the Senior Cabin Crew should nominate a crew member to remain on passenger oxygen, but this didn't actually happen either. It was all ignored and other crew members just suggested I swap my bottle with that of the crew member who used mine!

I really think this situation should be clarified as it really does not take any longer to get the ring main switched on - or maybe the crew don't know where to find a mask. Perhaps it would be easier and preferable for the company to load one or two spare bottles.

Are you operating in accordance with your Procedures Manual and are your Procedures clear?