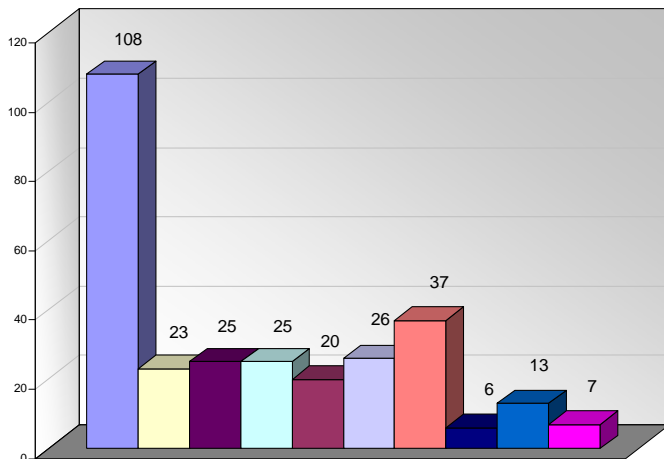


# CABIN CREW FEEDBACK

Issue No: 31

Spring 2009

## Most Frequent Cabin Crew Issues Received 12 Months Ending February 2009



- Duty**  
(Rosters/Rostering - 47, Length - 29, Rest - 19, Crewing - 7, Discretion - 4, Disruption - 2)
- Procedures**  
(Use of by Other Party - 12, Inadequate - 9, Incorrect - 1, Knowledge - 1)
- Regulation/Law**  
(Knowledge of - 21, Compliance with - 4)
- Communications - Internal**  
(Team - 21, Managers - 4)
- Company Policies**  
(Operational - 19, Safety Reporting/Culture - 1)
- Pressures**  
(From Management/Supervision - 15, Commercial - 6, Time - 5)
- Works Council Referral**  
(Terms & Conditions/Industrial Relations - 31, Health & Safety - 5)
- Passengers**  
(Behaviour - 4, Compliance with Instructions - 1, Medical Condition - 1)
- Aircraft Technical**  
(Cabin Equipment Deficiencies - 11, Structure - 1, Systems - 1)
- Environment**  
(Extreme Temperature - 3, Air Quality - 2, Noise/Distracton - 2)

## EDITORIAL

The first report in this issue of CABIN CREW FEEDBACK highlights the unacceptable practice of cabin crew using mobile phones after the cabin has been secured for take off and landing. The primary role of cabin crew is passenger safety and there is a strong emphasis on the importance of vigilance during "critical phases of flight" during training. It is therefore hard to understand how some cabin crew could consider that it is appropriate to text or phone at this time. Emergency evacuations do

occur with little or no warning during take off and landing as shown by three recent serious incidents - British Airways B777 at Heathrow, US Airways A320 ditching in the Hudson River in New York and Turkish Airlines B737 in Schiphol. Cabin crew must be fully alert and mentally prepared to deal with an emergency situation during every take-off and landing.

The use of mobile phones can also be a distraction during turnarounds when performing what could be perceived as more "mundane" duties such as dressing the cabin, preparing the galleys etc. It is more likely that detecting irregularities such as suspect packages, faulty equipment etc could be missed.

Operators detail procedures relating to the use of mobile phones in their Operations Manual. These may vary slightly between operators but as a minimum they will reflect the 2004 CAA Aeronautical Information Circular (AIC 1/2004 - (Pink 62)); which states that: flight crew and cabin crew should observe the same restrictions as those required for passengers and should ensure that "all intentionally transmitting PEDs (Personal Electronic Devices) are completely switched off once all the aircraft doors are closed before start of flight and shall remain switched off until the passenger door is opened ... at the aircraft commander's discretion only the use of intentionally transmitting PEDs may be permitted when the aircraft is stationary during prolonged departure delays provided sufficient time is available to check the cabin before the flight proceeds, similarly after landing the commander may authorise use of intentionally transmitting PEDs in the event of a prolonged delay for parking or gate position even though the aircraft doors are closed and the engines are running."

Some operators have more restrictive policies which require all cabin crew mobile phones to be turned off before the pre-flight briefing and not switched on until after the post-flight briefing. Exceptions to this will require permission from the Commander. Other operators permit only the In Charge to use a mobile phone for issues related to the operation of the flight.

Persuading passengers to adhere to mobile phone restrictions is difficult at the best of times. When crew members flagrantly disregard the rules it is unrealistic to then expect passengers to comply. It is also likely to compromise passenger respect for cabin crew - a respect which is fundamental for the safety of everyone on board.

## REPORTS

### SAFETY-RELATED DUTIES DURING CRITICAL PHASES OF FLIGHT

**Report Text:** We, as crew are told constantly that we must be focused and vigilant after cabin secure in preparation

A Cabin Crew Safety Newsletter

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

for take-off (until seat belt signs are switched off) and again in preparation for landing after passing cabin secure (until we are on stand and seatbelt signs off).

I find it unbelievable that some of the crew try to text or are even making calls during these "focused" periods, it's like they just don't care or they think that nothing will ever happen.

I must confess that, worryingly, it's mostly senior crew who are the worst offenders. This has a negative effect on junior crew who now think that this is acceptable and copy them, not to mention crew reading newspapers magazines...

Is there anything that can be done to prevent this constantly happening?

**CHIRP Comment:** Only safety-related duties as detailed in your company's Operations Manual must be carried out during critical and focused phases of flight.

This report was raised with the operator who confirmed that their cabin crew procedure clearly states that there should be no cabin crew activity or conversation that is not directly related to the safe conduct of the flight. At this time, each crew member should silently focus on their individual safety responsibilities.

The CAA requirements do not permit the use of mobile phones once the aircraft doors are closed and the Operators' SOP's reflect this. A notice to crew reminding them of their responsibilities has been issued.

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## NEW BOARDING PROCEDURE (NON-UK OPERATOR)

**Report Text:** My company has adopted a new boarding procedure. Once the last passenger has boarded, we should now close the doors, count the total passengers on board and, if correct, we give "cabin secure" to the flight crew; if not correct we go back to stand, offload pax or whatever.

If we close the doors after the last pax has boarded the aircraft this means that the flight crew are ready and they start the push back. But we still have the passengers in the aisle looking for a seat. This is not safe for passengers as they can fall over. The company does not pre-board families with children, so we have to start moving passengers around to sit parents with their children. This all when the aircraft is pushing back or taxiing.

If the overhead lockers are full, we are now unable to offload luggage, even any oversized objects, because the aircraft doors are closed and we are taxiing. The toilets have to be empty, so what we do with the baggage? This is a particular problem on our AAA(Europe) flights where frequently we have to offload bags.

In addition to this, our manual also states that we have to start the safety demo as soon as the doors are closed, armed and cross checked. This is not possible as we still have to seat passengers, and do the headcount and see if it corresponds with the figures. It is only then we can start the demo and only in English, and we don't really even have enough time for that.

In some airports we push back and we are on the runway.

Finally, the flight crew are very busy during push back and taxi. They have to be focused and don't want to be disturbed, but we have to contact them to inform them about the total heads on board. If we have to make an emergency stop during taxi, a serious accident can happen as a quarter of the cabin is not yet seated. This rule is just made up to save seconds during our very short turn-around and is completely unsafe.

**CHIRP Comment:** This report was raised with the operator concerned who confirmed that their boarding/cabin secure procedures had been recently revised. The operator also advised that subsequent to the introduction of this new procedure a number of reports had been received by cabin crew highlighting similar concerns; as a result the operator is in the process of reviewing the text in their Operations Manual to ensure that the procedures, as described, are not open to misinterpretation.

The operator emphasised that when the passenger doors are closed it is not too late to off load excess or oversized baggage, which should not remain unsecured in the cabin, they request that the In Charge inform the flight crew immediately to enable the aircraft to return to stand, where bags would be placed in the hold.

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## EXCESS HAND BAGGAGE (1)

**Report Text:** I recently operated one of our West African routes and the flight was almost full. The hand baggage we had coming on was excessive. Some of the bags were so big they could not fit into any overhead locker. The amount of hand baggage delayed our departure and instead of looking after passengers - comfort and safety - all my time spent during boarding was trying to sort out hand baggage issues which quite frankly should be done on the ground before boarding.

If you look around departures at most airports and at self service areas you will see metal hand baggage allowance measuring devices, these are also located down route. These should be used for the purpose they were designed for.

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## (2)

**Report Text:** My wife works for a ### and usually does the check-in for the AAA(West Africa). She always comments how concerned she is about the vast amount of hand baggage that is taken on board un-weighed.

Even though passenger hand baggage is weighed at check in, by the time the passenger has got to the gate, the rest of their hand baggage suddenly appears.

**CHIRP Comment:** Both reports have been forwarded to the CAA and highlight the difficulties of cabin crew in trying to stow excess hand baggage. Cabin crew should be the "final filter" in a process to manage hand baggage which should include monitoring at check-in and most importantly, at the gate.

It would appear that passengers generally choose to stow their hand baggage in the overhead bins rather than under the seat in front of them. Advising passengers to use the under seat stowage on boarding may help to ease the situation.

If there is unsecured baggage in the cabin then alert the flight crew before leaving the gate/stand for assistance in having items consigned to the hold. Cabin crew should always report hand baggage problems to their management (via CSR/flight report) for monitoring and action.

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## MANAGEMENT OF PAX DURING TURBULENCE

**Report Text:** I was returning as a passenger from my holiday and was seated in an emergency exit row, immediately behind some washrooms. Just prior to pushback, a passenger seated behind us went to one of the washrooms where he/she remained while the aircraft

was moving and the first engine had been started. On the way back to their seat they passed one of the cabin crew who had taken his/her position just in front of us for the safety briefing; I was somewhat surprised that nothing was said, just an exchange of smiles.

During the flight, the seat belt sign was switched on a number of times for turbulence and then remained on for significant periods. There were no announcements advising passengers to return to their seats, fasten their seat belts and that the washrooms must not be used. Neither were any checks carried out by the cabin crew that seatbelts had been fastened. It was announced that during these periods, hot drinks would not be served. Passengers continued to use the washrooms with occasional queues forming by our seats. One of the queuing passengers asked a cabin crewmember if they could have a cup of tea only to be advised that this was not possible "due to the expected severe turbulence". In my honest opinion the turbulence was no more than light, occasionally moderate, so safety was barely compromised. However, would it be worth checking with this airline that these actions by the crew were in accordance with their approved procedures?

**CHIRP Comment:** This report was raised with the operator who advised CHIRP that the activities described in the report were not in accordance with company procedures.

A safety notice highlighting the correct procedures during turbulence encounters has been issued. Also, In Charge's have been instructed to discuss these procedures within briefings. The operator has also increased the number of spot checks at briefings and on flights.

If passengers refuse to comply with the seat belt signs, report it to the In Charge, who should notify the Captain.

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## DAMAGE TO AIRCRAFT BY GROUND VEHICLE DOWNROUTE

**Report Text:** We were downroute and due to fly home to the UK via AAA (where we were scheduled to stop to pick up a small number of pax). After receiving our wake-up call in the hotel and checking out, we were waiting for the crew bus to take us to the airport when we were informed that we were likely to be delayed leaving the hotel as the aircraft had arrived in AAA from the UK but was delayed. The delay was due to the fact that a ground vehicle had driven into the side of the aircraft causing a dent in the side of the fuselage. We were told that the engineers 'thought' it was just superficial damage however, were sending pictures back to the UK to 'be on the safe side!'. After waiting around for a couple of hours we were informed that the aircraft was fine but that due to crew hours we would be staying an extra night in the hotel and checking out the following day.

The following day we checked out of the hotel in the afternoon and made our way to the airport to take the aircraft back to the UK. I am unaware what information was passed to the Captain but as far as we were aware the aircraft was safe to fly. We operated the flight without any problems. We later discovered that upon arriving into the UK the aircraft was in far worse a state than we were aware and was subsequently grounded. Apparently the engineers in the UK could not even understand how we had made it home safely as it was so severely damaged. To my knowledge the aircraft is still grounded.

It has raised questions in my mind as to the competence of engineers at outstations and how it can be possible to

ascertain the extent of damage simply by sending a picture back to the UK engineers.

**CHIRP Comment:** The reporter's concerns were raised with the Engineering Quality Department of the operator, who confirmed that the aircraft did suffer ground damage after landing at AAA; this comprised some scratches and dents. The damage was assessed in accordance with the Structural Repair Manual by the engineer downroute at AAA and photographs were also sent back to the UK (this is normal practice for an incident of this type) to permit the damage to be reviewed by the company Engineering Department. The company subsequently issued a Design Organisation Instruction (DOI) to permit the engineer at AAA to release the aircraft to return to the UK with a Deferred Defect raised in the aircraft Technical Log in order to check that the damage was as reported on return to main base; this is normal practice when issuing a DOI. On return to the UK the damage was re-assessed in accordance with the company's procedures and a decision taken to rectify the damage. The company has conducted an internal investigation into the ground incident and has also reviewed the procedures followed by the ground engineer in this particular case.

The reporter's concerns were understandable given that they would not be familiar with engineering procedures. The report highlights how easily a misunderstanding can occur, which in this case caused the reporter considerable anxiety. In a relatively unusual situation such as that described, it would be most helpful for the Captain to advise the In Charge of the situation to permit the cabin crew to be briefed.

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## CALCULATION OF HOME STANDBY DUTIES

**Report Text:** I am seeking some advice with regards to standby duties. Cabin crew are being rostered early standby duties, which can commence from 0400 for a period of 8 hours. However we have recently noticed that on our rosters our duty period time is only being shown as 6 hours and not the 8 hours on standby periods that commence prior to 0800 hours. We have been advised by the company that on standby prior to 0800 hours that 2 of those hours we would be asleep which reduces our accrued hours and this is in line with CAA guidelines.

My concern is that, as I am also responsible for my FTL, if the company are showing reduced duty hours then this is not a true reflection of my actual duty hours whether I get called from standby or not, as I am still at the behest of the company.

I would be grateful for your advice as to whether this is normal/acceptable practice.

**CHIRP Comment:** Clarification was sought from the CAA who advised that this is a standard clause in all FTL Schemes.

**The Approved FTL Scheme of the operator mentioned in this report states:**

"To count as half the time on duty, the standby duty when undertaken at home, or in suitable accommodation provided by the Company, takes place during the period 2200 and 0800 hours local time, and the crew member can take undisturbed rest and is not called out for duty."

In the case described above the four-hour period from 0400 to 0800 was permitted to be reduced to two hours. Should you be unsure of what your own company's Approved FTL Scheme states in relation to standby duty, a copy should be available for you to refer to.

# 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"> <li>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.</li> <li>On closing, this Report Form will be returned to you. <b>NO RECORD OF YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS WILL BE KEPT</b></li> <li><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.</li> </ol>
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"/>		DATE OF INCIDENT		BOARDING <input type="checkbox"/>	INFLIGHT SERVICE <input type="checkbox"/>
CABIN CREW <input type="checkbox"/>	SUPERNUMERARY <input type="checkbox"/>		TIME	LOCAL/GMT	DISEMBARKING <input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER: <input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER:			AIRCRAFT LOCATION		<b>FLIGHT PHASE</b>	
EXPERIENCE/QUALIFICATION			THE AIRCRAFT		PRE-DEPARTURE <input type="checkbox"/>	TAXI <input type="checkbox"/>
TOTAL YEARS	YEARS WITH CURRENT AIRLINE		TYPE/SERIES		TAKE-OFF/CLIMB <input type="checkbox"/>	DESCENT/LANDING <input type="checkbox"/>
CURRENT AIRCRAFT TYPES QUALIFIED ON:			NUMBER OF CABIN CREW		STAND/GATE ARRIVAL <input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER: <input type="checkbox"/>
1.	2.	3.	NUMBER OF PAX ON BOARD		<b>TYPE OF OPERATION</b>	
PASSENGER(S)/INJURY(IES)			NUMBER OF EXITS		SCHEDULED <input type="checkbox"/>	CHARTER <input type="checkbox"/>
PASSENGER(S) INVOLVED? YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>		<b>WEATHER (IF RELEVANT)</b>		CORPORATE <input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER: <input type="checkbox"/>
INJURY TO PASSENGER <input type="checkbox"/>	INJURY TO CREW <input type="checkbox"/>		TURBULENCE <input type="checkbox"/>	THUNDERSTORM <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>My MAIN POINTS ARE:</b>	
THE COMPANY			OTHER:		A:	
NAME OF COMPANY:			REPORT TOPIC / MY REPORT RELATES TO:		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