

CABIN CREW FEEDBACK

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EDITORIAL

CABIN CREW **CHIRP** - YOUR COMMENTS

As many readers will be aware, this Programme is sponsored by the CAA (SRG). Although the Programme is managed by an independent Board of Trustees, the CAA does of course need to be assured that it is cost-effective; for this reason the aviation programmes are subject to an independent review every five years; the next is scheduled to be conducted towards the end of this year.

In addition to an objective assessment of the cost effectiveness of the programme by the Review Board, it is important that the programmes are perceived by the relevant user groups as making a positive contribution to flight safety. We are therefore inviting comments from you and your managers. If you wish to comment please use any of the methods available (see the attached report form), via our website: www.chirp.co.uk or e-mail us at: confidential@chirp.co.uk.

All comments received will be made available to the Review Board.

PRE-FLIGHT DUTIES

CHIRP continues to receive reports from individuals in relation to pre-flight duties. The reports state that cabin crew are 'encouraged' by some operators to have completed pre-flight activities such as reading safety notices, printing flight paperwork etc before report time. Although it is not stated in company manuals/notices, crew are expected to have completed these tasks prior to the start of the pre-flight briefing.

Whilst it is not unreasonable for cabin crew who are part time, have been absent due to long-term sick leave or returning from a holiday to allow extra time to catch-up with notices etc. cabin crew should not be expected to routinely arrive early to complete these tasks.

In April 2009 the CAA issued a Flight Operations Department Communication (FODCOM 10/2009) to all operators on a number of FTL issues. The relevant text is as follows:

"Report times (and post-flight duty times) are specified in FTL Schemes and are intended to give crew members sufficient time to complete all pre- or post-flight duties. The guidance suggests, for large companies, one hour as a minimum for pre-flight duties with half an hour for post-flight duties. However, the CAA occasionally receives reports that

indicate that operators are very reluctant to change report times even if there has been a considerable change in circumstances at the report location (e.g. in security or crew baggage handling requirements). FOIs [CAA Flight Operations Inspectors who are assigned to oversee a company's operations] will expect operators to demonstrate that report times will allow all required duties to be accomplished within the specified times under normal circumstances. If a significant number of operators prove unable to do so, the CAA may consider raising the minimum allowable report time."

If you consider that your company does not provide adequate time for pre-briefing duties, report the details using your company's internal reporting system and request that the company monitor the situation. However, if you feel unable to report directly to your company, please continue to report the matter to **CHIRP**.

REPORTS

AM I IN CHECK?

Report Text: I possibly already know the answer, but would like to have it confirmed please. My last flight on the B### was over six months ago (I have not physically seen or operated one in this time). I have had my new roster published and whilst I am not operating this aircraft type, what happens when I have to? I sought clarification from the company and was informed that having recently completed my Recurrent SEP I am now "back in check". On this course we used a paper cut-out to discuss how to arm and disarm the door.

Crew have been informed that by regularly attending refresher courses this will keep us all in check on an aircraft type, but not actually see the aircraft. Does the CAA see this as safe? A crew member could go almost a year without seeing the aircraft and still be ok to fly on it. I am uneasy with this. My understanding was that I had to fly on an aircraft type within six months to stay within check.

Can you please assist me in providing clarification?

CHIRP Comment: The CAA Cabin Safety Office confirmed that if a cabin crew member has not undertaken duties on a particular type of aeroplane within six months, they must either complete Refresher training on the type or operate two familiarisation sectors. However, Recurrent training may be substituted for Refresher training if the period initiated by previous Recurrent training remains valid. Therefore

A Cabin Crew Safety Newsletter

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

the process described in this report is in accordance with EU-OPS requirements.

If there is any uncertainty, your own company procedures should be checked. It is also worth noting that your own company's procedures may be more restrictive than the minimum legal requirement.

DISCRETION - KEEPING THE CAPTAIN INFORMED

Report Text: We left our hotel at 09.30 GMT and reached the airport 15 mins later.

Take off was delayed due to slow boarding and we eventually departed at 12.15 GMT. We arrived at our intermediate stopover at 16.25 GMT, where a new flight crew boarded. We took off for our final destination at 18.05 GMT and landed at 01.30 GMT.

Off duty 02.30 GMT (i.e. total duty 17 hours). We checked in flight with the Captain who did the second sector and he told us that we were in hours; however on landing into CCC, he said, "Oh sorry, you did go into discretion!".

CHIRP Comment: It is the responsibility of all UK operators to have a procedure whereby the aircraft commander is able to monitor and control cabin crew FTLs; this is particularly important in a case such as that described above, where separate flight crew operate outbound/inbound and cabin crew operate both sectors. Where there is a change of Captain downroute, the SCCM should provide the new Captain with details of the cabin crew duty hours.

In a situation where a Captain might need to exercise discretion on behalf of the cabin crew in order to complete the duty, best practice (and positive CRM) would be for this to be communicated to all cabin crew members, via the SCCM.

Finally, it is also worth noting that whilst the Captain must 'take note of the circumstances', cabin crew should report for any duty well rested and fit for that duty and, if necessary, be prepared to operate the maximum permitted flying duty period for that timescale. Any circumstances that might affect duty hours (e.g being called out on standby) must be conveyed to the Captain via the SCCM. Without adequate information about cabin crew duty hours, the Captain will be unable to make an informed decision about the legality of using discretion.

CONTINUOUS OR SPLIT DUTY

Report Text: We were rostered to operate on AAA(UK1)-BBB(UK2) BBB-CCC(Eu)-BBB followed by a nightstop in BBB then a taxi back to AAA the following morning.

Two hours before this duty it was changed to a 0330 report for AAA-BBB with a landing time at BBB of 0500. The return sector BBB-AAA departed at 1315, arriving into AAA at 1415. This left us with a period of 5h45m during which the company did not provide us with a rest area but we were told that we would be spending the time in the BBB crew room. We saw this as a split duty and were expecting a suitable area to rest whilst we awaited our afternoon flight back to AAA. Crewing advised the Captain that it was not a split duty but was a continuous duty and therefore did not warrant any rest

area being provided to the crew. We had to sit on uncomfortable chairs in a freezing cold crew room with lots of crews coming and going for the entire period.

Something needs to be done with regards to a rest area if it is going to continue in this way.

CHIRP Comment: CAP 371, on which all Approved Company FTL Schemes are based, states that a Flying Duty Period may be extended by Split Duty when the FDP consists of two or more sectors separated by less than a minimum rest period (ie for cabin crew 11 hours or at least as long as the preceding duty period less one hour - whichever is the greater). Where the scheduled FDP is expected to be completed within the appropriate maximum (as it appears was the case in the example described in this report) then there is no need to incorporate Split Duty, even though several consecutive hours between sectors may be spent on the ground.

Therefore the information provided by Crewing would seem to have been correct. However, with more than four hours between the sectors, it would have been appropriate for the crew members to find a more comfortable location in which to relax.

SYNCHRONISED SAFETY DEMONSTRATIONS

Report Text: The Safety Demonstration was started whilst the aft-most cabin crew member was still completing their turn-around duties in the rear galley. The crew member in question joined the demonstration just prior to the completion of the emergency exits demo, attempting to catch up to his/her colleagues with high speed hand movements - more confusing than helpful. It was impossible to follow the demo as completed by the front two crew, they were simply too far away.

Lessons Learned: Ensure all crew are in their required positions, and ready before starting a task that requires their input.

CHIRP Comment: This report was submitted by a positioning flight crew member and acts as a reminder to cabin crew that all passengers must be able to view a complete and co-ordinated safety demonstration. It also highlights that safety duties must always be given priority over service related tasks. Whilst galley preparation is important it must not be to the detriment of any safety-related duties.

CAN YOU SEE OUT OF THE WINDOW?

Report Text: Having recently operated on one of our B### (wide body) aircraft, I was dismayed to see that as the door operator at D2L I was unable to see out of door window when strapped into my crew seat. The forward facing crew seat has been removed and that crew position has been relocated to D4L for take off and landing.

As cabin crew we sit down and strap-in as soon as our cabin checks are complete pre take-off and remain strapped-in until seat belt signs are switched off after landing, so with this new configuration we are unable to make outside observations during taxi from this crew position as they are now seated at D4L. God forbid should any mishaps or unusual abnormalities occur in

the vicinity of this door whilst taxiing as they will now go undetected. Our manual states that cabin crew must be alert to hazards, particularly during take off and landing, both inside and outside the aircraft and that crew attention must be focused on the safety aspects of the departure or arrival.

Lessons Learned: Stop the removal of this seat and replace those that have been removed.

CHIRP Comment: The design of small windows in many aircraft doors and the location of the adjacent cabin crew seats do not allow crew the capability to see outside from the seated position. Being able to see outside is just one hazard that crew need to be aware of and, where possible, passenger windows should be used to help gauge outside conditions. If you are unable to see outside whilst strapped into your crew seat, it is imperative that passenger reactions are monitored during aircraft taxi.

A formal procedure must be followed in relation to all layout/configuration changes which have to be approved by the regulatory authority.

In relation to this report, the removal of the crew seat had been conducted in accordance with CAA/EASA and FAA certification standards.

DELEGATION OF SCCM'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Report Text: Just before the descent I overheard the SCCM saying that he/she had delegated their responsibilities (ie. crew seat and overall cabin) to another (junior) crewmember, as it had been sometime since they had sat in the flight deck for landing.

The whole crew had not been briefed as to the changes so had an incident occurred there would have been a breakdown in the chain of command. The rest of the crew only found out that the actual SCCM was not in position when they passed their cabin secure checks for landing. The call 'cabin crew seats for landing' which normally would be made by the SCCM after passing the cabin secure to the flight crew was made by the Captain, again not in accordance with SOPs and causing confusion amongst the rest of the crew.

CHIRP Comment: The responsibilities of the SCCM should be clearly defined in the Operations Manual (EU-OPS 1.210) and only in unforeseen circumstances would the delegation of those responsibilities be permitted, again in accordance with the Operators procedures. A desire to sit in the flight deck for take off or landing would not be considered an unforeseen circumstance. In addition, EU-OPS 1.310 requires that on all the decks of the aeroplane that are occupied by passengers, required cabin crew members shall be seated at their assigned stations during critical phases of flight.

FLIGHT DECK FAMILIARISATION

Report Text: We were flying a four-sector day with two extra 'supernumerary' cabin crew who were totally new to aviation. During the pre-flight briefing in the crewroom the Captain suggested to the SCCM that the new cabin crew should come in to the cockpit during flight so as to see what happens and what flight crew

actually do, to give them 'the bigger picture'. This conversation was overheard by the Base Manager who took it upon themselves to inform their Manager who then approached the SCCM and informed them that they were not to allow the new crew members in to the flight deck as it was not part of their training and was unnecessary.

I feel that this will only help to create an atmosphere of 'them and us' and make any new crewmember unwilling to contact flight crew and report anything unusual. There is already a physical divide between the crew during the briefing and policies like this will only make the mental divide worse.

Lessons Learned: We need to act as crew not just flight crew and cabin crew in order to operate safely. The cabin crew need to feel part of 'the team' and not that they are there just to provide coffee.

CHIRP Comment: Many UK operators include a flight deck visit during a supernumerary flight as part of their cabin crew training. The reporter's comments have been referred to the operator.

PASSENGERS CAN BE YOUR EYES AND EARS ...

CHIRP Narrative: This report was taken from the US ASRS (Aviation Safety Reporting Scheme) CALLBACK Publication (Issue 350) and shows the importance of taking the time to listen to a passenger's concerns:

An alert passenger observed a problem and literally "drew a picture" for an MD80's flight crew and company mechanics, averting a potentially serious inflight incident.

■ On completion of flight, a passenger seated on the left side of the aircraft asked to speak with us on the jet bridge. The passenger presented us with a drawing of the left wing and stated he saw missing or detached rivets and a loose wing panel just forward of the flight spoilers. We presented the diagram to maintenance. Aircraft mechanics confirmed rivets were missing/pulled through and a wing panel was loose. The aircraft was taken out of service. This panel would not be seen during a normal pre-flight inspection. While on the ground it looked normal. Only in flight did it lift away from the wing structure. Our thanks to the alert passenger who communicated the problem clearly to crew and mechanics...Without his sharp eye and clear description of the problem, we would have continued to fly this aircraft.

CHIRP Comment: This report serves as a useful reminder that cabin crew members should be vigilant at all times and any information or unusual situation that they or a passenger may become aware of may be valid and should be passed to the flight crew. Remember, do not dismiss a passenger's concern without considering it first or discussing it with your SCCM.

IN CHARGE OR SCCM?

In previous issues of CCFB we have used the term 'In Charge' as part of our disidentification process to describe the cabin crew member designated by the operator and trained to EU-OPS requirements for the role of the lead cabin crew member. From this issue we have adopted the term Senior Cabin Crew Member (SCCM) reflecting EU-OPS terminology.