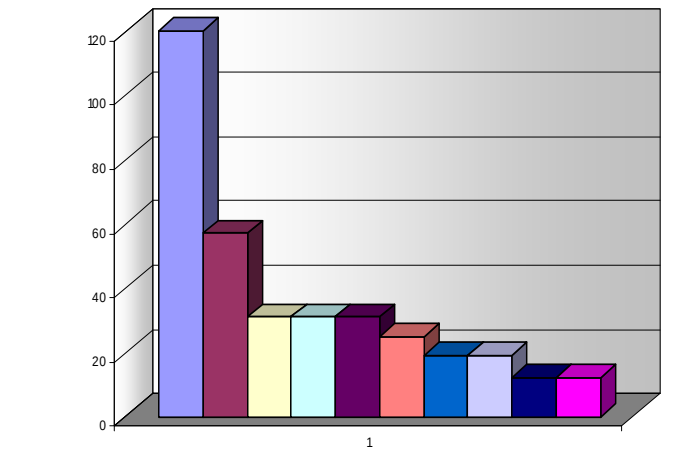
CABIN CREW

CHIRP FEEDBACK

Issue No: 35 Spring 2010

Most Frequent Cabin Crew Issues Received 12 Months Ending February 2010



Duty
(Rosters/Rostering - 53, Length - 29, Rest - 17, Discretion - 16, Crewing - 4, Disruption - 1)

Works Council Referral
(Terms & Conditions/Industrial Relations - 56, Health & Safety - 1)

Company Policies
(Operational - 28, Disciplinary/Grievance - 2, Responsibilities/Accountabilities Unclear - 1)

Pressures
(Commercial - 13, Time - 10, From Management/Supervision - 8)

Procedures
(Application/Use of - by Other Party - 27, Inadequate - 2, Understanding/Interpretation/ Complicated - 1, Inadequate - 2, Knowledge of - 1)

Communications - Internal
(Team/Shift/Watch - 21, Managers - 4)

Regulation/Law
(Knowledge of - 16, Compliance with - 3)

Team Working
(Insufficient Team Work/Building - 14, Lack of Leadership/Assertivness - 3, Unrealistic Expectation - 1, Working in Conflict - 1)

Security
(Ground - 9, In Flight - 3)

Aircraft Technical
(Cabin Equipment Deficiencies - 7, Systems - 2, Structure - 1, Airworthiness - 1, Design - 1)

EDITORIAL

EXPLANATION OF FLIGHT TIME LIMITATIONS, PART 2

Following-on from the last issue of CABIN CREW FEEDBACK (No. 34), here are some further FTL clarifications. As mentioned previously, the following guidance is based on the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) publication CAP 371 - Avoidance of Fatigue in Aircrews. Remember, your company's Flight Time Limitations scheme is approved by the CAA and this, if different from the following, is the definitive document for your company's operations.

Extension of Flying Duty Period by Split Duty: When an FDP consists of two or more sectors that are separated by less than a minimum rest period, this is called a Split Duty and may allow the FDP to be extended.

The rest period shall not include the time allowed for immediate post and pre-flight duties, a minimum total of 30 minutes. The actual time allowed shall be specified by the operator.

When the rest period is 6 hours or less it will suffice if a quiet and comfortable place, not open to the public, is available. If the rest period is more than 6 consecutive hours, then suitable accommodation must be provided.

When rest is taken in the aircraft on the ground, the minimum standards of noise, temperature, light and ventilation are to be specified in the Operations Manual. Such arrangements will only be permitted when the crew have adequate control of the temperature and ventilation within the aircraft, and passengers are not on board.

Commander's Discretion to Extend an FDP: The Captain may, after taking note of the circumstances of other members of the crew, extend an FDP provided he/she is satisfied that the flight can be made safely. Many cabin crew are under the impression that they must be consulted by the Captain. This is not the case, for there is no requirement for the Captain to hold a face-to-face discussion to notify cabin crew that discretion will be used, however crew must be made aware that they are to enter discretion. The maximum permitted extension is 3 hours, except in cases of emergency. An emergency is a situation, which in the judgement of the Captain, presents a serious risk to the health or safety of crew and passengers, or endangers the lives of others.

The Captain is legally required to complete a Discretion Report which is available for inspection by the CAA Flight Operations Inspector designated to oversee the airline's operations at a future audit. If Discretion used is greater than 2 hours the Captain must provide a written report to the CAA within 14 days of the aircraft's return to base. If an operator

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has a significant number of Discretion Reports the CAA may use these to assess the realism of particular schedules.

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 where separate flight crew operate outbound/inbound and cabin crew operate both sectors. Where there is a change of Captain, 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 either directly or via the SCCM.

The extension shall be calculated according to what actually happens, not on what was planned to happen.

Commander's Discretion to Reduce a Rest Period: The Captain may, at his/her discretion, and after taking note of the circumstances of other members of the crew, reduce a rest period but only insofar as the room allocated to the crew member must be available for occupation for a minimum of 10 hours. The exercise of such discretion shall be considered exceptional and must not be used to reduce successive rest periods.

If the preceding FDP was extended, the rest period may be reduced, provided that the subsequent allowable FDP is also reduced by the same amount.

CAP 371 states: "In no circumstances may a commander exercise discretion to reduce a rest period below 10 hours at accommodation."

Unforeseen Circumstances: The extreme weather conditions experienced this winter and the disruption it caused to many operators resulted in flight and cabin crew experiencing very long duties. These could be deemed to be 'Unforeseen Operational Circumstances'. Such unforeseen circumstances resulted in airfield closures - including diversion airfields, difficulty in contacting company Operations Departments and irate passengers. Unfortunately, these **unplanned** events are just that, unplanned and beyond the control of an operator. If you experienced any FTL-related difficulties as a result of the recent snowy weather, you might wish to report these concerns, via an internal report, to your company to enable them to be aware and to learn from them and for possible inclusion into future contingency plans.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRE-FLIGHT SAFETY CHECKS

Report Text: Aircraft was in transit, new crew come on board, pax stay on board. Crew check their equipment and do a baggage ID before boarding rest of pax.

Normally on this aircraft type, we use individual screens for the safety demo but the video wouldn't load, so a manual demo was carried out. After the demo was completed and cabin secure passed, the crew member responsible for performing the demo in their cabin informed a colleague that they hadn't done their demo as they couldn't find their kit, apparently the SCCM had been informed and "was fine with it."

Cabin secure for take-off had already been given and crew were ordered to take seats for take-off.

The demo kit was found during flight and the crewmember was made aware, they were also informed that it was part of their pre-flight checks to make sure the demo kit was in place and complete. Again, they claimed the SCCM had been informed and they didn't see a problem with it.

My concerns are:

1. The pax in this cabin didn't get shown a demo (CAA requirement).
2. The crew member didn't do their checks properly pre-departure - which has possible security implications.
3. The SCCM had no problems with the lack of demo for these pax.

I think a reminder needs to be sent to crew to make them aware of their pre-flight check duties as well as making sure that they know exactly where their equipment is.

CHIRP Comment: **Whilst pre-flight equipment and security checks can be time consuming, their importance must not be underestimated. Whilst the reporter did not mention it in their report, 'On Time Performance' and pressure from ground staff to commence the boarding process often places undue pressure on cabin crew to rush through their pre-flight checks. All pre-flight checks must be completed thoroughly and without interruption.**

There can be a natural tendency for cabin crew to rely on video demonstrations but, as in all aspects of your daily duties, you should be fully prepared to deal with the unexpected.

All passengers must be given the opportunity to observe a pre-flight demonstration.

AIRCRAFT PRESSURISATION

Report Text: There was a fault to the cabin pressurisation system. The flight crew informed the cabin crew that they would cruise at 10,000 feet and try to extend the rate of ascent/decent so as to reduce the likelihood of us suffering any pain to our ears. The Captain informed the SCCM that it was perfectly acceptable to operate without cabin pressurisation. I am concerned because we had elderly passengers on board, was it safe for them to travel in an unpressurised cabin at 10,000 feet? Also were there any risks to passengers and crew for possible hypoxia?

I would like confirmation that this incident was within all applicable rules/legislation.

CHIRP Comment: After seeking clarification with the operator's Engineering Department as to what the aircraft's Minimum Equipment List (MEL) stated; it was confirmed that the flight was permitted providing it was operated in an unpressurised configuration, at or below 10,000 feet and that repairs were made within three flight days. This information was provided to the reporter. It should be noted that MEL procedures differ between airlines and aircraft types.

In relation to the reporter's concern for passengers and crew flying in an unpressurised aircraft, medical evidence indicates that at an altitude of 10,000 feet a seated person should suffer no significant adverse effects. Serious symptoms such as altitude sickness (decompression sickness) does not occur at a cabin altitude below 18,000 feet - except in individuals with serious medical conditions. If the descent is not carefully controlled, some passengers, particularly children, may experience ear pain/discomfort. Cabin crew should therefore monitor elderly or vulnerable passengers more closely.

Cabin crew should also be aware that, in the event of an in-flight medical emergency the lack of cabin pressurisation might require the use of therapeutic oxygen.

PERMISSION TO ARM/DISARM AIRCRAFT DOORS

Report Text: The SCCM (who has the responsibility for arming/disarming D1L on the B###) was told by the Captain that the jetty was too close to the aircraft and D1L was not to be put into automatic when all other doors were.

I was responsible for D1R.

The SCCM called all doors to automatic and cross check, which we all did but I was unable to cross check with D1L as it was still in manual.

We did the safety briefing, secured the cabins, and it was at some time after all of this, as far as I can remember, that the SCCM finally put D1L into automatic and we finally did the crosscheck. We could see the jetty that the Captain was worried about. It was certainly fairly close to the aircraft, but surely that should be our decision if an evacuation was called for? As it was possible to see the jetty, in an evacuation I assume the SCCM would have decided it was unsafe to use that door and re-directed. As it was, we were in danger of forgetting to arm the door at all.

I am unsure whether the Captain ultimately gave permission for the door to be armed (I would have thought he was too busy) or if the SCCM was instructed to do it after we had pushed clear of the jetty. Either way, the Captain went against SOPs. Is he allowed to do this?

Lessons Learned: I think we should have queried the Captains decision.

CHIRP Comment: EU-OPS states *"the Commander shall have the authority to give all commands he/she deems necessary for the purpose of securing the safety of the aeroplane and the persons or property carried therein".* Deviation from standard operating procedures (SOPs) is not recommended, however this may occur in exceptional circumstances for safety reasons. The crew should be fully briefed as to the alternative procedure and rationale.

If you feel that a current SOP within your company does not work or that it would benefit from an improvement, let your company know, via an internal report. This will enable the relevant SOP to be reviewed and possibly amended.

UNMANNED DOORS DUE TO PERFORMANCE OF PASSENGER CPR

Report Text: Approx 40 mins after take off a passenger became critically ill and CPR was commenced. Flight crew were informed and made the decision to land. CPR continued during landing, however, this team also had door responsibilities and the event impacted on door coverage in the rear cabin, although help did come from elsewhere within the aircraft, not every door was manned for landing.

What is the legal position for crews?

CHIRP Comment: Requirements state that the commander must ensure that each passenger and crew member on board occupies a seat or berth with his/her seat belt properly secured during take-off and landing. However, saving a life is a priority, provided in doing so there is no additional significant risk to the other passengers and crew on board. In exceptional circumstances such as these, cabin crew should make all reasonable attempts to ensure that both passengers and crew are secured in the best possible manner and that routes to exits are not obstructed. Any non-compliance with standard operating procedures should be advised to the flight crew.

CHIRP

CABIN CREW REPORT FORM

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

Name:	◣ Indicates Mandatory Fields
Address:	
Post Code	Tel:
e-mail:	

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.

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

SCCM ☐ CABIN CREW ☐
SUPERNUMERARY ☐ ☐
OTHER:

EXPERIENCE/QUALIFICATION

TOTAL YEARS | YEARS WITH CURRENT AIRLINE

CURRENT AIRCRAFT TYPES QUALIFIED ON:

1. | 2. | 3.

PASSENGER(S)/INJURY(IES)

PASSENGER(S) INVOLVED? YES ☐ NO ☐
INJURY TO PASSENGER ☐ INJURY TO CREW

THE COMPANY

NAME OF COMPANY:

THE FLIGHT/EVENT

DATE OF INCIDENT
TIME LOCAL/GMT
AIRCRAFT LOCATION

THE AIRCRAFT

TYPE/SERIES
NUMBER OF CABIN CREW
NUMBER OF PAX ON BOARD
NUMBER OF EXITS

WEATHER (IF RELEVANT)

TURBULENCE ☐ THUNDERSTORM ☐
OTHER:

REPORT TOPIC / MY REPORT RELATES TO:

CABIN ACTIVITY

BOARDING ☐ INFLIGHT SERVICE ☐
DISEMBARKING ☐ OTHER:

FLIGHT PHASE

PRE-DEPARTURE ☐ TAXI ☐
TAKE-OFF/CLIMB ☐ DESCENT/LANDING ☐
STAND/GATE ARRIVAL ☐ OTHER:

TYPE OF OPERATION

SCHEDULED ☐ CHARTER ☐
CORPORATE ☐ OTHER:

MY MAIN POINTS ARE:

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:

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