

# CABIN CREW FEEDBACK

No: 5

October 2002

## EDITORIAL

### CABIN CREW FEEDBACK, YOUR OPINION ...

What do you think of this newsletter? Is it a good read? Are the reports relevant and of interest to you? Have we got the balance right? If you have any comments on the layout/content of CABIN CREW FEEDBACK please send them to Kirsty Arnold, Cabin Crew Programme Manager, at the address at the foot of this page.

### REPORTS ON SECURITY ISSUES

Just a reminder that our policy is not to publish reports on security aspects in CABIN CREW FEEDBACK. However, the human factors implications of the revised security procedures are most important and, for this reason, all reports that we receive on this subject are reviewed by the Advisory Board and forwarded to the Civil Aviation Authority (Safety Regulation Group) for consideration, in conjunction with the Department for Transport (DfT), in relation to the new security policy.

We welcome further reports on this important subject.

### BACK ISSUES

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

## REPORTS

### DO NOT DISTURB!

*Following the introduction of the locked flight deck door policy, we have had a number of reports relating to communications between the cabin and the flight deck.*

(1)

There seems to be inconsistency amongst flight deck crews regarding when, and when not, to contact them. In my Company, the SOPs state that telephone contact

be at 20-minute intervals. Some flight crew, especially on long haul routes, do not wish to be disturbed at all on night sectors. Other flight crew complain we are now telephoning too often.

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(2)

This two-man flight crew did not want cabin crew telephoning the flight deck every 20 minutes, which is what our procedures are, to ensure the safety of flight crew, as well as to offer drinks etc, and so told (cabin) crew they would phone them in the galley as and when they wanted anything. I explained this was not the Company procedure and asked as to why? I was told that if one of them were dozing/having some rest in their seat the telephone would not disturb them. The frequency of calls from flight crew sometimes went as long as two hours without any word between cabin crew and flight crew.

*Regular checks, as described, are required to ensure that one flight crew member remains fit and alert.*

*Company procedures relating to cabin crew and flight crew communication should be provided to include all types of sectors, i.e. long haul, short haul, day, night and should reflect the increased use of interphone between the cabin and the flight deck that is now necessary.*

*Company procedures agreed with CAA (SRG) and published in the Operations Manual must be adhered to and should not be changed without Operations Manual amendment.*

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### RECENCY

*This report refers to a Company recency policy.*

My Company has specific recency requirements and I am qualified on more than one aircraft type. I flew on one of the types several weeks ago and went out of Company recency one week ago. All my work between those dates had been on the other types.

A Cabin Crew Safety Newsletter

from the Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme

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When I rang the scheduling department and asked to swap one of my trips to the type that was due for expiry to maintain my Company recency, I was told "no deal" as the Company policy was that because I was in a 'flying type' environment, I couldn't go out of recency and, as long as when I first got on the expired type, I didn't operate a door for the first sector (take off and landing) I'd be back in Company recency. "Don't worry, the In Charge will be made aware, and there will be some form of notation on the paperwork".

I arrived at work and was due to operate on the expired type. At the briefing there was no indication that I was out of Company recency. I opted to operate a different working position and told the Senior about my being out of Company recency so they operated my door for the first sector, I am now back in Company recency.

It seems hard to believe the In Charges aren't informed of the status of their crews. If I hadn't kept an eye on my dates I wouldn't have known I was out of Company recency. If the 'wheel had fallen off' the In Charge would have carried the can for my being out of Company recency. It would have been too easy to get on the aircraft and carry on as normal (operate a door). How many crew do this?

***If a company establishes a policy of recency, it should also establish effective procedures for the management of the policy. Once company recency requirements are agreed with CAA (SRG) they must be adhered to.***

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### DISCRETION

I feel compelled to bring to your attention events experienced during a recent duty. I would ask you to bear in mind that my understanding of regulatory proceedings and restrictions is limited.

I checked in for a long-haul flight at 1330 local time. We boarded all passengers as normal, and took off shortly after 1530. Approximately two hours into the flight, we were advised by the In Charge, that we were returning to the departure airfield due to a technical fault.

The Captain made a 'PA' to the passengers advising them of the situation and we turned back. No emergency procedure was instigated, and we continued to serve and finish the meal service.

We landed soon after 2000 and it was decided that the time elapsed in our duty was such that we would be replaced by another crew. We waited in the departure lounge. This is where the confusion starts.

I was not told personally but 'the word' was that as we had already completed nearly eight hours duty, a decision would be made as to whether our flight would operate. If it did, the replacement crew would operate the flight. If it were cancelled, we would be stood down.

The next thing we knew, we were being taken to another aircraft, and we had to operate a different, slightly shorter flight, which had been delayed. We were then sent on various 'guilt trips,' including no crew on standby, it's legal to operate, and there are no hotel rooms available for these passengers.

On boarding, the In Charge made us aware that three of the designated crew had elected not to operate the duty, clearly having been given a choice. Had I been asked, I would have made the same decision. With all passengers boarded, two replacement crewmembers arrived at the aircraft, and the door was closed approximately 2200. Up until this time, we had not had any formal meal break, only managing to 'pick' at items of food between duties.

This flight was extremely busy, this on top of having to go through the stressful experience of a non-standard landing on the previous flight and also coping with frustrated and anxious passengers.

We were allocated 1 hr 25 mins in crew rest, but the flight was so busy, this amounted to a little over an hour's actual rest.

We landed at approximately 0500 UK time, and finally arrived at the hotel at approximately 0630 UK time. This event amounted to an extensive and excessive duty of 17 hours with minimum rest.

***The maximum flying duty periods (FDPs) for Cabin Crewmembers are specified in your Company's Approved FTL Scheme***

***For the flight sequence described, the maximum allowable Cabin Crew FDP permitted by CAP 371 - The Avoidance of Fatigue in Aircrews is 13¼ hours (CAP 371 Table A, plus one hour). However, the maximum FDP could have been extended by use of Commander's Discretion by up to three hours.***

***Only the Commander is allowed to use discretion after taking note of the circumstances of the cabin crew and other members of the flight deck crew.***

***If you are unaware of the location of your Company's Approved FTL Scheme, please ask your Crewing Department who will be able to point you in the right direction.***

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### POSITIONING/DEADHEADING FLIGHTS

Crew "positioned" aircraft from AAA (UK1) to BBB (UK2). Due to the aircraft type, doors must be armed, so crew armed/disarmed the doors, sat by exits etc, and additionally "looked after" flight crew on this ferry sector.

That evening we were required to operate BBB (UK2) - CCC (Med) - BBB (UK2) on 'very outside' of hours. However, Crewing argued that we would only do two

sectors, as the first did not count. As far as I am aware this is wrong and the first sector does count. Management have subsequently also "confirmed" that we only operated two sectors!?

***This subject has been raised in CABIN CREW FEEDBACK before. Cabin Safety Office CAA (SRG) have advised as follows:***

In order to be classed as 'deadheading' (or, as it is often called, 'positioning'), cabin crew would have to be passengers on the flight, that is to say they must not have been required to carry out any safety- or service-related duties, which would be carried out by a member of the operating crew.

When crews are deadheading, sectors are not counted and the time spent is accountable as 'duty' but not as 'flying duty'. However, if subsequently they operate a sector within the same 'flying duty period', then their flying duty time will be counted from when they first reported for deadheading.

If on a particular sector the only passengers are employees of the company and there is no freight other than 'company' freight, then the flight is non-revenue. In this case, there is no requirement that cabin crew must be carried to undertake safety-related duties. In practice, in the absence of cabin crew, flight crew undertake door arming and disarming duties, and carry out safety briefings.

***The CAA (SRG) advice has been passed to the Airline concerned.***

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### **SEATING PROBLEMS**

On a recent flight we were instructed by the (airline) station manager to place three children in one seat, with one adult and another child in a second seat. This meant 5 passengers in 2 seats.

As far as I am aware, and please correct me if I am wrong, but this kind of double (or triple!) seating is not permitted.

***Indeed it is not! As it happens, this was not a UK airline.***

***This report was forwarded to Department for Transport for their information.***

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### **AIRCRAFT CLEANING**

A passenger on a recent flight suffered a serious haemorrhage. On my way to assist, as I walked up the aisle I noticed that there was a substantial amount of blood on the carpet from the passenger's seat leading up to the toilets. There was also blood covering the door

where the passenger had pushed the toilet door open. Operations were well aware of the situation, as paramedics met the aircraft; engineers also had to change the medical equipment so as not to ground the aircraft for its second sector. Another crew were waiting to take the aircraft straight out; they were informed by the operating crew that the toilet had been blocked-off because of the situation. Due to the delay that the medical emergency had caused, the aircraft had only been "quick cleaned", so as not to create a further delay. What shocked me was that there was a large amount of blood left; the aircraft should have had a major clean or been grounded as the passengers plus crew would be using that toilet.

***This report was forwarded to the Company who looked into the matter of aircraft cleaning. The Company emphasised that incidents such as this should be entered into the Cabin Defects Log; this would have triggered engineering to schedule a carpet change for that section of carpet, as bodily fluids were involved, and to focus the cleaning staff on cleaning the appropriate areas. The aircraft would not be grounded unless the soiling was considered significant.***

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### **ABP'S - SEATING POLICY**

It is now the policy of this Company to charge for any empty extra legroom seats by emergency exits, should passengers wish to upgrade to them after boarding the aircraft.

On one flight recently, several passengers asked me if they could move to six empty seats with extra legroom that were available on the aircraft. When informed that they would have to pay extra they declined. My crew seat next to the door for which I was responsible faced these six empty seats. The rest of the aircraft was full and the door opposite me was unmanned because no one was prepared to pay the extra to sit there.

I believe that there is a safety issue here. Should there have been an emergency requiring evacuation on takeoff or landing, precious seconds would have been lost because perfectly good able-bodied persons (ABPs) were not immediately available to open the unmanned door/s. I feel that safety is being compromised for the sake of a few extra pounds for the Company, not to mention the lives of the passengers and crew.

***The company procedures should clearly detail the policy for the seating of ABPs to ensure that safety is not compromised by the sale of seats designated as ABP seats.***

***This report has been passed to CAA (SRG).***

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