

CABIN CREW FEEDBACK

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EDITORIAL

ADHERENCE WITH SOP'S

In recent months, CHIRP has received a number of cabin crew and flight crew reports detailing incidents in which flight crew members have instructed cabin crew members not to comply with company SOP's. Some reporters have questioned whether aircraft commanders can issue such instructions.

Aircraft commanders retain the ultimate responsibility for the safety of the aircraft and can issue such an instruction in an emergency, if they consider that the safety of the aircraft would be otherwise compromised. This of course would be specified in the Operations Manual.

In all other instances, compliance with Company SOP's is what crew members will expect.

Should cabin crew encounter deviations from SOP's, particularly in relation to the secured flight deck door, other than in emergency situations, the issue should be addressed through the normal company reporting system as the first option, unless the matter is resolved at the time.

Whenever possible, confidential reports of this type, after disidentification, are made available to the operator concerned, and are also passed to the Civil Aviation Authority (Safety Regulation Group).

CHIRP FOR CABIN CREW

The Cabin Crew Confidential Reporting Programme has now reached its 2nd anniversary, during which period we have received 189 reports. We would like to thank those of you who have submitted reports and trust that we have been able to assist in raising awareness to the issue(s) that you have brought to our attention.

The overwhelming majority of reports have been directly related to safety, but please remember that industrial relations issues or matters related to your terms and

conditions of employment should be raised either with your company or your union.

REPORTS

DETACHED SLIDE RAFT COVER

On one of our aircraft, one of the slide covers has, after months of not being securely attached, now become completely detached on occasions when opening this door. Our engineering department is aware of this problem and I have been told that this is a common problem with this type of cover.

This is a rather large obstruction to this particular exit and in case of an emergency evacuation could have serious consequences. Surely having no loose objects in front of these main doors during take off and landing should include this slide cover which is nearly half the size of the exit.

I would think that this exit should not be a usable exit until such time as the problem has been rectified.

Please inform whether this is correct?

The Company confirmed that the problem was common on this aircraft type and had been reported to the manufacturer for modification action. The manufacturer has raised a Service Bulletin that addresses modification action although this is not mandatory. Some operators have already made the modification whilst others are completing the work during 'C' checks this winter. Newly manufactured aircraft embody the modification. This problem had not always been reported in the Tech Log when the cover had come loose. Please remember all cabin defects should be entered in the Cabin Defects Log so the commander may then transfer the appropriate items into the Tech Log; this will enable engineering staff to take remedial action.

If a slide cover becomes detached during the period of operation of the aircraft, the restrictions of the MEL should be complied with, and of course it should be stowed, so as not to impede use of the emergency exit.

A Cabin Crew Safety Newsletter

from the Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme

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PHEW! IT'S HOT IN HERE ...

I regularly operate on our company's twin engine shorthaul jets. The air conditioning in these aircraft is at best ineffective and often not working at all. During the last six weeks I have regularly worked in temperatures of 35 degrees plus. At one point the temperature on board reached 40 degrees and on two occasions it has reached 39 degrees.

The temperatures are terribly uncomfortable for the passengers and all you see in the cabin is people dripping with sweat and fanning themselves with their safety cards. I regularly have to stop during the service and retire to the forward galley to mop sweat from my face. Even when not serving the heat has a soporific, numbing effect. It surely cannot be safe to keep working in these conditions?

We regularly complain to our management but nothing has been done to alleviate the situation. We have been told that there is no maximum temperature for our working environment on board, is this true? Is there anything we can do about this situation?

This report was raised with the Quality Assurance Manager who was only too aware of the problem; the Company have increased the routine maintenance of the air conditioning system (above the manufacturer's recommendations), have improved the efficiency of the ground air conditioning units and allocated these to dedicated stands for this aircraft type. The Company have also carried out remedial work within the cabin and during heavy maintenance the aircraft will have their interiors 'much improved'. This situation is being closely monitored at a senior level within the Company.

Whereas CAA (SRG) consider system failure modes that may result in excessive cabin temperatures in flight in the certification process, no maximum cabin temperatures are stipulated for ground operations. Without such a limitation, there is little incentive for operators to provide an alternative means of alleviating this problem.

TROLLEY SERVICE

It has become a new procedure to operate the trolley service on two double carts. The problem is that there are only three crew members to carry out the service. One crew member, usually the In Charge, has to move a heavy drinks cart on their own. The Company has told crew not to do this but as you can imagine during a busy service pax often want to pass to use the toilets so crew have no alternative but to move the cart alone. This has resulted in a number of crew complaining of back pain. The Company seems reluctant to stop this procedure as they believe it standardises things for a four crew aircraft.

The other problem is that there is no room in the forward galley for a double cart, both need to be stowed in the rear galley. This becomes a safety issue in turbulence or in an emergency situation.

Why can't one crew member use a single cart until the fourth crew member becomes available, then they could take another single cart and run the two back to back?

Does there need to be a serious injury before action is taken?

This report was referred to the Company who, after completing a review of this procedure, now only operate the double cart at the rear of the aircraft.

BRACE YOURSELF

I work for a charter airline, and have previously worked for other scheduled airlines, including low-cost.

The brace position we are taught for normal operations (i.e. every take off and landing) with my current company is feet back, sitting on hands and head back against headrest. This is for both forward facing and aft facing jumpseats.

As was my understanding from previous airlines, the CAA recommendation for placement of feet for crew in an aft facing seat is slightly in front of the knee (i.e. out in front of the crew member) so that in an impact, the feet are pushed into the floor (because if they are placed behind the knee as we are told, they will swing back and could incapacitate the crew member). In a forward facing jumpseat our feet should be behind the knee (as in passenger feet position) for the same reason. This was certainly the position we adopted in my previous companies.

Can this be clarified for me?

The CAA (SRG) Cabin Safety Office advises that no cabin crew brace positions have yet been made because no UK research has been carried out. Each operator is responsible for determining the brace position that cabin crew members adopt, depending on the location and orientation of the crew seat. The CAA has, however, published recommended passenger brace positions based upon the research it has commissioned.

Notwithstanding the current position, the promulgation of recommended cabin crew brace positions for forward/aft facing seats would seem to be worthy of further consideration.

SEATS FOR LANDING

Two of us were working in the #### cabin. We received the '20 minutes to landing' call, so tidied and secured

cabin & galley and gave checks to the In Charge. We were in the galley changing into jackets etc. and making one final check in the galley when the aircraft landed.

We learned that the pilot had been given a direct approach. Neither of us heard any instructions over the P/A for 'Cabin crew to take seats for landing'. Some of the other crew members could see the accelerated approach but in the ### cabin galley you are isolated from the 'outside world'. Neither of us were hurt, just shocked and of course our designated doors were unmanned.

PRESSURE TO FLY WHILST UNWELL

I recently felt most unwell and called in sick. I was given heavy pressure NOT to report sick, as sick levels were already extremely high, causing an impact on operations.

I operated the service but felt so bad that I went to see a doctor down route, who diagnosed bronchitis.

I felt intimidated by the company to work whilst unwell.

The responsibility of individual crew members to ensure that they are properly fit and able to undertake a Duty Period are detailed in JAR-OPS 1 Sub Part B 1.085(d)(5) " ..., or feels unfit to the extent that the flight may be endangered".

Similarly, the operator's responsibility for ensuring that crew members are fit to undertake their duties is set out in JAR-OPS 1 Sub Part O 1.995(a)(3) "An operator shall ensure that each cabin crew member remains medically fit to discharge the duties specified in the Operations Manual."

The situation described in this report would suggest that these responsibilities had not been met.

Regrettably the air transport industry is no different from many others in that some individuals use sickness as a means of gaining additional time off, often at short notice. The disruption that this behaviour causes often leads management to introduce specific procedures to monitor absence; this can result in individuals, who consider themselves to be genuinely unfit to undertake their duties, feeling under pressure to fly. This is clearly an unsatisfactory situation and worth considering, if you are tempted to 'throw a sickie'.

OPERATING UNDER MORE THAN ONE AOC

I currently work as cabin crew for ### and currently fly on their aircraft under their AOC & SOPs.

Recently I have attended a training course in order to fly an associated company's aircraft, which are operated under different AOC/SOPs. We have been told that we

must fly on both AOC's aircraft, switching from one set of SOPs to another, sometimes during the same working day.

I am not sure whether this is safe or legal as all the crew who have been on the training course have been left confused and scared to operate under both SOPs. If there is an emergency on board one aircraft, for example, I believe the crew would be very confused as to what procedures to follow.

I would be very grateful for your feedback and information.

JAR-OPS 1 does not contain any requirements for cabin crew operating in aircraft that are managed under more than one AOC. In order to address this deficiency CAA (SRG) issued FODCOM 14/2002, which contains information on the training and supervision for crew operating under more than one AOC holder. In terms of operating, the FODCOM states:

1.3.1 a. Cabin crew should be limited to operating concurrently with a maximum of two AOC holders at any one time.

1.3.1 b. Where cabin crew are operating concurrently with two AOC holders, they should normally be limited to one aircraft type or variant of a type with each operator.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER COLOURS

During a recent safety and emergency procedures refresher we were shown fire extinguishers. It appears that they now come in two "colours" either red or chrome irrespective of type. Immediate dissent but reassurance, "you can tell by the nozzle shape". A plea to the SEP instructor produced "it's the same in the airport buildings, so they look nice", from the airport fire officer conducting the lecture. So beware folks you could find yourself fighting a fire in electrical equipment with a water extinguisher and deadly results.

There is an ICAO colour code; this is not being complied with.

This report refers to a non-UK operator, but raises an interesting point.

All containers of fire extinguishants must now be red in colour to comply with EU policy, however fire extinguishers that were in place before the directive become effective do not have to be replaced until they become redundant.

In the UK, red fire extinguishers may have labels of different colours and shapes to assist in identifying with their contents. (Black = CO2; Green = BCF/Halon; Blue = Powder.)