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## What would you do?

Coping with disruptive PAX can be an increasing challenge



**Jennifer Curran**  
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**T**he safety and security of an aircraft, its crew, and passengers must always be the priority and most flights operate without any issues with passengers who are enjoying the flight experience, or quietly going about their day. However, there are a small number of flights where this isn't the case, and where passengers' behaviour is not acceptable – this could be anything from them being verbally abusive to, in some cases, physical assault of fellow passenger or the operating cabin crew.

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Any behaviour of this kind is unacceptable whether this is in social or work situations; operators do have procedures in place to support crew in dealing with such situations on the day and afterwards.

Disruptive behaviour could be displayed for a variety of reasons e.g. delays, anxiety, intoxication, medical conditions, mental health or drugs (prescription and illegal). Travelling through an airport is not the 'norm' for many people and this can become stressful for some. A person's actions are only "the tip of the iceberg"; beyond the surface, hidden causes of behaviour could be attributed to emotional, social, cultural, and other variables.

Preventing disruptive passenger incidents is always the best mitigation, but not always possible, particularly with less human contact prior to boarding than ever before – you as the operating cabin crew may be the first to notice any unusual behaviour or potential problems.

Denying boarding to an intoxicated or unruly passenger is potentially a cabin crew's first option so it is important to take time during boarding to ensure that you are situationally aware, remember that greeting passengers is not just about saying hello, it is also an initial assessment of them. Are they fit to fly? Are they displaying unusual behaviour or showing signs of alcohol intoxication? Would you chose them as an ABP? These observations may help you spot the first signs of an issue prior to the flight getting airborne. Remember, if something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't.

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has defined a four tier threat level hierarchy. The ICAO level of threat ranges from verbal abuse (Level 1) through to attempted or actual breach of the flight crew compartment (Level 4). *For more information on ICAO threat levels please see report FC5275 below.*

All operators train cabin crew de-escalation techniques as part of Aviation Security SEP training and often these techniques are the best tools to calm down a situation, or an individual. Situations in flight can be magnified, travelling at 35,000ft in a big tube packed with other people can test the patience of many, however the majority of these passengers will not become disruptive.

Please take time to review your operators de-escalation techniques and take a few minutes to think, *what would I do if I was faced with an unruly passenger today?* What are the options available to you as cabin crew?

In the event of a passenger showing signs of becoming disruptive perhaps changing the crew member that is dealing with the incident would help, sometimes a new face can reset the conversation. If alcohol is a factor,

there are several techniques that can be implemented to prevent intoxication and the behaviour that brings, such as slowing down the service, making non-tolerance announcements, ensuring that all crew are aware of those showing signs of having had too much alcohol so that more isn't served etc.

If appropriate, it may be worth sharing experiences and techniques during the briefing. For further strategies please click on this link [Even safer and more enjoyable air travel for all \(iata.org\)](https://www.iata.org/en/pressroom/2023/01/10/even-safer-and-more-enjoyable-air-travel-for-all)

As mentioned above, disruptive behaviour from a passenger is unacceptable and unfortunately, despite attempting de-escalation techniques and a number of the suggestions already mentioned, some situations are unresolvable in flight and this can result in an aircraft diversion.

The UK CAA state 'The punishment for disruption varies depending on the severity. Acts of drunkenness on an aircraft face a maximum fine of £5,000 and two years in prison. The prison sentence for endangering the safety of an aircraft is up to five years. Disruptive passengers may also be asked to reimburse the airline with the cost of the diversion. Diversion costs typically range from £10,000 - £80,000 depending on the size of the aircraft and where it diverts to.' [Disruptive passengers | Civil Aviation Authority \(caa.co.uk\)](https://www.caa.co.uk/News-and-Events/Press-Releases/2023/01/10/Disruptive-passengers-Civil-Aviation-Authority)

Early this summer EASA launched the 2023 Fly Right Campaign and some airlines and airports are working together to identify and develop new strategies that can minimise the frequency of these occurrences [Unruly Passengers - Fly Right Campaign 2023 | EASA Community \(europa.eu\)](https://www.euroopa.europa.eu/press-releases/2023/01/10/unruly-passengers-fly-right-campaign-2023-easa-community)

Other than banning disruptive individuals, some operators will also initiate a prosecution. Please remember to make detailed notes of the incident, their description, behaviour and seat number (manifested seat, as often they can move around the cabin) along with names of witnesses (cabin crew and passengers). It is important that any instances of disruptive behaviour is reported via your company's internal reporting – just think the individual could have behaved like this on another flight and no one had reported it...

Stay safe,  
**Jennifer Curran**

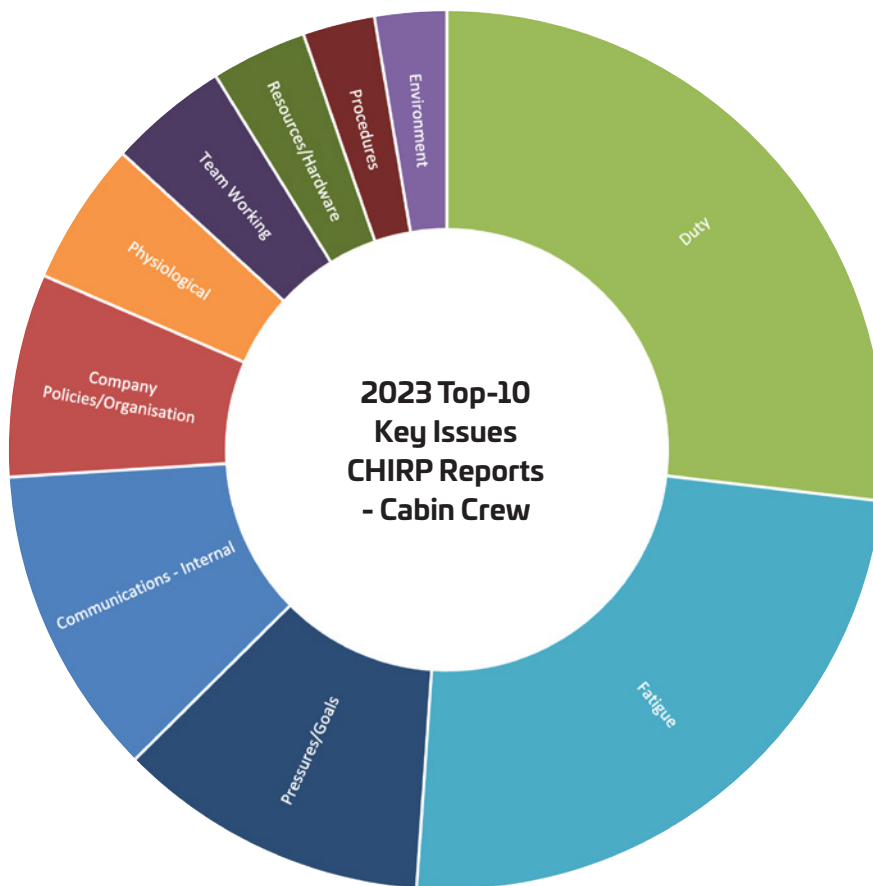
*The topic of this editorial was chosen in response to CHIRP receiving a number of reports relating to disruptive passengers, not just from cabin crew but from flight crew as well. Two of these disidentified reports can be read in the reports section of this newsletter.*



## CHIRP FEEDBACK Survey

We value your opinion about our FEEDBACK newsletters and associated engagement methods, please spend a few minutes responding to [10 short questions about CHIRP Aviation FEEDBACK](#).





**Report Update**

Cabin crew, primarily from UK operators, submit confidential **safety-related** reports on a variety of topics to CHIRP; key issues this year continue to be related to duty periods, fatigue and pressures/goals. CHIRP received 104 reports from cabin crew in the third quarter of 2023. The top-10 key issues from these reports are shown in the graphic.

**Reports**

**Report No. 1: CC6405 Alcohol; Airport consumption**

**Report Text:** This is a general report due to recent issues related to alcohol consumption. Irrelevant of how much money retail shops generate on alcohol there is no control on alcohol consumption at airports. This occurs when purchasing a bottle from a retail shop at duty-free or drinking alcohol at a bar/restaurant. If safety is our number why is this happening?

Staff at airports should be implemented with passenger limitations on alcohol consumption as staff do not want any confrontation with traveling passengers however this falls on cabin crew during inflight. The main issue is not passengers who are intoxicated BUT passengers who are halfway to being intoxicated.

During inflight we do not know how much alcohol was consumed before departure. Whilst I guarantee you that most flight attendants take all necessary steps during inflight we still face direct confrontation with passengers when we refuse to serve them more alcohol onboard. As you are aware some intoxicated passengers get aggressive, start to be loud or start interfering with other passengers around them or use abusive language in a flight where children are also present.

During a flight that occurred, I offloaded 3 passengers not because they were not fit for travel. They were being loud during boarding & acting in a childish manner 'disturbing the peace' let's say. Had I not intervened this situation would have escalated after take-off.

Not knowing if I am permitted to do so as this is a grey area, I even confiscated their own alcohol as irrelevant of how many

announcements or how many times you tell passengers they still would have consumed their own alcohol during the flight. Some passengers think it's like a cat & mouse game where I need to catch them out. Having so many years of experience, being loud (which is not a crime) & under the influence of alcohol, I've learned not to take any chances however we still indulge in stress and abuse from the offloaded passengers.

**Company Comment:** All our crew are fully trained in dealing with potential disruptive passengers and on de-escalation techniques. We support our crew in offloading any passengers that appear intoxicated prior to departure. We do also promote communication between crew on the day and have had a number of cases where it is crew in the rear galley that have identified these passengers and informed the senior crew member so they could be offloaded. A collaborative approach from airports on the sale of alcohol to passengers prior to departure is needed.

**Report No. 2: FC5275 Disruptive PAX**

**Report Text:** I am deeply concerned about the lack of action being taken regarding disruptive passenger behaviour, fuelled by excessive alcohol consumption and drug use affecting flights to a well-known party destination. My cabin crew are constantly having to deal with passengers who are either unable or unwilling to comply with safety instructions, or who are abusive and disruptive during the flight.

While the company have made it clear that the crew are empowered to cease the sale of alcohol on board if necessary, this is totally ineffective if the majority of passengers are already intoxicated when they board the aircraft, or deceptively consume their own duty free purchases after take-off.

I have operated flights in the past where there has been so much disruption in the cabin that, had an emergency situation arisen, I very much doubt that the cabin crew would have been able to a) successfully brief the passengers for an emergency landing or b) obtain any kind of compliance or meaningful action in the event of an evacuation. Sadly, I think it's only a matter of time before an incident occurs on one of these flights and the lack of sobriety by the majority of the passengers will be the direct cause of either injury or death.

Article 242 of the ANO states that nobody must enter an aircraft while drunk or be drunk in any part of an aircraft. This is extremely difficult for the gate staff to implement if a large percentage of passengers who are boarding are intoxicated.

There have been numerous attempts in the past to reduce these kinds of incidents; police presence at the departure gate, pre-flight communication to passengers regarding the potential consequences of disruptive behaviour on a commercial flight etc, most of which have done very little to improve the situation. The CAA, in conjunction with retail outlets, pubs and bars need to implement a system whereby the sale of alcohol can either be limited or withheld from customers travelling on certain routes.

#### **CHIRP Cabin Crew Advisory Board (CCAB) Comment**

**CC6405 and FC5275:** CHIRP are increasingly receiving reports from both cabin crew and flight crew who are worried about the amount of alcohol that can be bought and consumed whilst in the airport terminal and during flights. Reports CC6405 and FC5275 highlight the concerns seen by the entire crew.

An individual's tolerance to alcohol is variable but the cabin environment with its reduced pressure and humidity can result in dehydration and mild hypoxia which, when combined with alcohol, can result in intoxication and this is frequently mentioned as one of the major contributing causal factors in disruptive passenger incidents.

Whilst many airports and operators are promoting the '[onetoomany](#)' campaign advising passengers of the implication of being disruptive onboard, there are currently no licensing laws in UK airport terminals.

Some airlines have had discussions with the police and airport operators to ensure that the duty-free staff are aware of the consequences of passengers drinking airport bought beverages onboard and how to mitigate the situation, however it's often a crew member who spots the problem first. Many operators have adopted a zero tolerance PAs and also refuse to serve passengers more than a certain number of drinks each, the drink service can also be aborted if passengers prove to be unruly or intoxicated.

Regardless of whether alcohol is involved the Commander has the authority to off load passengers and the SCCM should liaise with the flight crew as soon as possible if a situation arises in the cabin. Please refer to the editorial for more information and advice.

#### **CHIRP Air Transport Advisory Board (ATAB) Comment**

**CC6405 and FC5275:** Disruptive passengers are a particular problem at the moment and are recognised as such by the industry and regulator; this matter has also been discussed by the CHIRP Cabin Crew Advisory Board (CCAB) who have

published associated comments in Cabin Crew FEEDBACK Edition 81 offering practical advice about de-escalation but CHIRP agrees that more should be done to deny boarding of potentially disruptive passengers in the first place.

We note that the first reading of the 'Aviation Banning Orders (Disruptive Passengers)' Bill recently occurred in Parliament (24th May 2023) and this is intended to give some legal basis for action. However, the second reading in Parliament was not due until 24th November 2023 and so, although a welcome initiative, this is not expected to provide any productive resolution this year.

Part of the problem is that responsibilities for action are not clear: ground staff often just want to get rid of the problem by getting passengers onto the aircraft; airport bars and pubs want to maximise profits; and cabin crew are then often left to deal with the problem. As the commander of the aircraft, captains have a responsibility to support overtly and visibly (when practical) their cabin crew in the handling of disruptive passengers, and airlines could also usefully collaborate with an exclusion list such that problem passengers identified by one airline are banned from all airlines.

Within Annex 17 'Aviation Security', ICAO defines a disruptive passenger as: "A passenger who fails to respect the rules of conduct at an airport or on board an aircraft or to follow the instructions of the airport staff or crew members and thereby disturbs the good order and discipline at an airport or on board the aircraft." ICAO also defines a hierarchy of 4 levels of disruptive behaviour as below, and the Skybrary article 'Unruly Passengers' provides useful further material.

Legal action in respect of Level 3 and 4 is probably fairly straight-forward, but Level 1 and 2 transgressions are harder to deal with legally, and the threshold for when a Level 2 transgression becomes illegal under the Offences Against a Person Act 1861 is sometimes hard to determine. In regulatory terms, once the associated Aviation Banning Orders Bill mentioned above has passed through Parliament and become law, the acceptable level of evidence for legal action and bans should be clearer and more could probably be done in defining how to deal with such incidents, the powers of gate staff / cabin crew and the permitted levels of intoxication of passengers.

### **ICAO Hierarchy of Disruptive Behaviour**

#### **Level 1 – Disruptive Behaviour (verbal)**

This can include: irrational or disorderly behaviour involving alcohol or drugs; abusive language; and defiant actions such as non-compliance with Crew Member commands.

#### **Level 2 – Physically Abusive Behaviour**

This can include: pushing; grabbing; hitting or kicking a cabin crew Member or another passenger; damage to aircraft equipment and systems; or damage to the personal effects of a Cabin Crew Member or another passenger.

#### **Level 3 – Life Threatening Behaviour (or display of a weapon)**

The involvement of a weapon in any passenger disturbance immediately increases the level of threat. A weapon is a means by which terrorists can rapidly achieve control of a large number of passengers and cabin crew by intimidation.

The threat of a concealed weapon, the display of a weapon and the use of a weapon are all life threatening scenarios. When there is a threat of a concealed weapon cabin crew should attempt by peaceful means to confirm the existence of the weapon. When a passenger's behaviour deliberately threatens life, with or without a weapon being displayed, then the cabin crew should assume that the action may escalate into an attempted hijack. Weapons include: guns; explosives; stun guns; knives, any item incorporating a sharp point or edge; and wires and cords etc.

#### Level 4 – Attempted or Actual Breach of the Flight Crew Compartment

The highest level of threat is an attempted or actual breach of the flight deck, whether intended, threatened or achieved. Hijackers may concentrate on violence or the threat of violence against cabin crew and passengers in order to gain access to the flight deck, rather than an initial attempt to breach the flight deck.

Any threat or attempt to gain access to the flight deck has one purpose, to gain control of the flying of the aircraft, which may include the possibility of using the aircraft as a weapon.

### Report No. 3: CC6325 Arming of doors against SOP

**Report Text:** The SCCM told all ground staff to leave the aircraft. At this time, the Flight crew made a PA. The intro PA from the flight deck which is normally done during boarding.

During the flight deck PA I received an interphone call to my door. I answered as SOP "Name at door". I could tell it was the SCCM by their distinctive accent, they didn't say their name and what door they were calling from, as per the SOP. They said "Can you arm your door now please" and hung up.

I was thrown off guard as it wasn't the standard PA to instruct us to arm doors for departure. I also didn't know if I was just arming my door or mine and the door opposite me, as that door was uncovered at the time (SOP is to walk across and arm the door if the crew member isn't at their door yet and then verbally inform them their door is armed). I began second guessing myself if it was just my door they wanted arming in case of controlled disembarkation or another situation that I wasn't aware of.

I decided to arm both doors and call the back to check if they had received the same call from the SCCM. Which we said was very strange way to do it. It was confusing as it went against procedures and was not SOP.

The senior also made another incorrect PA regarding doors on the inbound sector.

On the flight we had crew on their familiarisation flight who didn't know what this announcement meant. This led to confusion on what the announcement meant. And one CC thought it meant we were standing by to an emergency (the PA Cabin Crew Standby)

**Company Comment:** We encourage all crew members to submit internal reports within the organisation. In line with our SMS (Safety Management System), we robustly protect our just reporting culture which allows the organisation to identify root causes and apply preventative actions to prevent re-occurrence. However, if a crew member feels that their report should be treated in an anonymous manner, we have an additional anonymous reporting system that can be utilised instead.

On the basis of what was reported to CHIRP, it is unusual for the PIC to make an announcement at that stage but can sometimes occur for a variety of reasons. The SCCM could have waited until the PIC PA was finished and then make a PA cabin crew to prepare doors for departure.

The SCCM allegedly elected to deviate from company SOP and called the door area via interphone to prepare the door for departure without utilising correct arming terminology. This action affected the arming of slides SOPs. However, safety has not been compromised as ultimately it is assumed that the SCCM checked the relevant crew panel and visually made sure all doors were armed prior to departure in line with SOP.

For the inbound sector, this announcement is standard and embedded within our procedures and training for both cabin crew and flight crew. The report indicates that some crew members were allegedly not aware of this command being used.

**CAA Comment:** Deviations from standard operating procedures, especially concerning errors or near-misses, should be reported using the operator's reporting scheme. This is essential to enable implementation of measures to prevent re-occurrence and escalation of severity.

**CHIRP Comment:** Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are designed to ensure consistency during a process such as the arming of aircraft doors, having a SOP in place allows every crew member to be aware of the procedure and of what should happen next. If for safety reasons, after considering the risk and safety impact, you have deviated from SOPs you should communicate this to your crew and the commander.

Due to the use of the PA by the flight crew, the SCCM crew member was unable to make the standard PA as per the operators door arming SOP. Without the SCCM deviating from the door arming SOP and making an interphone call rather than a PA, the aircraft may have been taxiing for several minutes with unarmed doors, which is also against the SOP.

There may be reasons why the commands were incorrect on the day that can be explained, or it might be that the SCCM needs some additional support, the operator is best placed to offer this support if it is required which is why with any safety concerns it is particularly important to report your concerns internally. Trends are one aspect of reports that are monitored and CHIRP is aware of one operator who recently revised a SOP as a result of safety reporting by crew.

CHIRP are unable to investigate reports without a reporter's permission, often when a reporter hasn't reported their concerns internally they don't want CHIRP to contact their operator either so CHIRP are in a position where they can't investigate and/or resolve a reported safety concern.



## Report No. 4 CC6265 Legality of long-day two sector duties

**Report Text:** We, as do many other airlines, operate flights. For example, tomorrow I am reporting for a AAA, this is rostered as an extended duty.

How is this duty is legal? How is anyone supposed to be expected to be at work for 14 hours and 35 especially since we are flying where your body is working twice as hard due to the pressurisation and altitude?

People on the ground will be at work for roughly 8 hours on average and have a break during this time. A break where they can actually shut off, have some alone time and get away from the “shop floor”. On the aircraft there is nowhere to take a comfortable break and absolutely zero chance of not being disturbed when you do take a seat on an extremely uncomfortable jump seat or worse, an atlas box placed on the floor. People are not robots, our bodies need to be taken care of. We need rest and time to recoup. This is absolutely impossible on this aircraft during this duty.

Something being deemed legal by someone sitting behind a desk is one thing, but actually going out and operating these duties is a completely different story. Nowhere else would you find an employee going to work to be at work for this amount of time with nowhere to take a break or rest. This isn't even factoring in the time that you actually wake up before the duty, travel to work and then again travel home and get out of uniform etc.

Long haul duties of the same amount of hours as a AAA or BBB are rostered around 3 hours mandatory crew rest. How then is it “legal” to have absolutely no rest whatsoever on a duty of this length on a single aisle aircraft? Any duty of this length should have rest. Whether that be on board the aircraft or as a night stop at the destination to AAA as there and back duties all in one day.

**Company Comment:** We are is grateful to the reporter for raising this report to CHIRP. These long sector flights are recognised as being some of the more challenging flights from a fatigue perspective and are therefore carefully monitored from both an FTL and FRM basis.

They have been regularly reviewed at the Flight Safety Action Group (FSAG) and we are constantly monitoring these duties proactively and reactively through surveys, predictive and actual fatigue reporting, occurrences, hazard reporting and trend analysis. Crew members are actively encouraged to take breaks on these longer duties to mitigate fatigue in accordance with the Operations Manual and explanatory fatigue material. We use crew rest areas on our wide body aircraft driven primarily by the FTL requirements of long haul operations.

We are always looking to improve, and our fatigue management programme has recently proven its effectiveness through actions taken from analysis of fatigue reports to increase pre and post flight rest opportunities around the more fatiguing duties. We actively encourage reporting which allows us to identify issues and trends and in turn address them. All our reports are handled confidentially

and in accordance with our Just Culture. Reports can also be submitted anonymously should the reporter wish to protect their identity even further.

**CAA Comment:** The rostering of flying duty periods (FDP) is subject to the operator's Flight Time Limitations (FTL) scheme approved by the CAA. Cabin crew should use their operator's fatigue reporting scheme to enable identification of potentially fatiguing roster patterns and implementation of changes.

**CHIRP Comment:** CHIRP empathise with the crew on any long duty day as they can be very tiring. It is important on any duty to manage your breaks appropriately and if this requires the service to be adapted, then please speak to your SCCM who can support appropriate planning of crew breaks through the duty. Again, any adaptations or deviations should always be documented.

This report refers to an ‘extended duty’, an extended FDP allows the Flight Duty Period (FDP) for acclimatised crew members to be increased without the use of in-flight rest – this equates to an **additional hour being applied to the FDP**. With the duty being extended so is the amount of rest required, **4 additional hours rest** must be included as either a pre and post-flight rest extension of 2 hours, or a post-flight rest increase of 4 hours. You cannot do more than 2 extended duties in any 7 consecutive days. An extended FDP duty must be planned in advance or the crew member must be on a specific standby that is to cover ‘extended duty’ flights.

## Report No. 5: CC6337 Flight deck rest

**Report Text:** I called the flight deck to make my routine check via interphone, there was no answer, this is concerning.

One FO was in flight crew rest, leaving an FO and Captain in the flight deck. I proceeded to enter the usual code into the flight deck door keypad, initially there was no answer, after a good 10 seconds I was allowed entry and asked to be quiet as the FO was in seat napping. The flight crew had not made the crew aware that both FOs we're napping at the same time.

**Company Comment:** Flight crew controlled rest as detailed in OMB, the SCCM, or nominated deputy, should be briefed that flight crew controlled rest is planned. During the brief should agree the timing of a routine 30 min check on the Pilot Flying. The watch-keeping pilot should notify the cabin crew when controlled rest is complete.

By the look of this report, the procedure was not correctly followed. XXX do not discourage controlled rest when the flight is operated by 3 pilots. Flight crew controlled rest may be necessary for example if a pilot fails to achieve good rest in the bunk (i.e. turbulence).

**CAA Comment:** Whilst this occurrence didn't have adverse, consequences, it is appropriate to report such deviation from SOP using the operator's reporting scheme. This enables the operator to assess potential risks and review the established procedure for effectiveness.

**CHIRP Cabin Crew Advisory Board (CCAB) Comment:**

The pilot in command should have informed the senior cabin crew member of the intention for the flight crew member to take controlled rest (in seat napping) and frequent contact should be established between the non-resting flight crew member and the cabin crew.

Given historic industry incidents, the Captain's failure to respond to the interphone call and the delay in responding to the flight deck door code being entered may have made the cabin crew member question what scenario they were about to confront. Cabin crew should query with the flight crew if they do not answer/make the calls as per the operator's procedure as there may be a simple reason why the SOP was deviated from.

**CHIRP Air Transport Advisory Board (ATAB) Comment:**

CHIRP has received a number of reports in the past from cabin crew regarding the procedure and practice of flight crew Controlled Rest, and it's one of those areas where reminders about what the process should be are useful.

Controlled Rest is sometimes referred to as 'in-seat-napping' and is used by most UK operators. It is the process where the flight crew can be 'off task', including taking short periods of sleep, whilst temporarily being relieved of operational duties in accordance with company prescribed 'controlled rest' procedures.

UK regulations GM1 CAT.OP.MPA.210 'Crew members at stations' describes the overall rules for conducting Controlled Rest, which is limited to 45mins per individual at any one time, with a maximum of 30mins asleep so that they don't enter deep sleep/sleep inertia. Under Controlled Rest, one member of the flight crew should always be awake at all times and, although flight crew can sequentially take controlled rest, there should be 20mins between such periods to ensure that the crew member who has come out of rest is fully alert and briefed before the other one enters rest.

Controlled Rest should only be used during periods of reduced cockpit workload i.e. during cruise, and has been proved to increase alertness levels during other critical stages of flight such as the approach and landing. Some of the longer-range aircraft have designated rest areas for the flight crew to use but these should only be used when there are more than two flight crew rostered to operate the flight.

The need for flight crew to inform cabin crew that they are undertaking Controlled Rest is a fundamental requirement both to ensure that such periods are not interrupted by the cabin crew but also for safety reasons so that the cabin crew can ensure that both operating flight crew have not inadvertently fallen asleep.

The flight crew must tell the cabin crew how long they will be conducting Controlled Rest for, and the plan for regular contact intervals (e.g. every 30mins) to ensure that communications between the cabin crew and flight crew are maintained. In support of this, there should be procedures stated in the company's OM-B for how controlled rest will be managed. When conducting contact at the prescribed interval, cabin crew should understand that an immediate response may not be possible if the awake flight crew member is busy with other tasks such as communicating with ATC or carrying out critical flight activities that delay them responding.

**Report No.6: CC6343 Potential and actual fatigue due to poor rostering**

**Report Text:** My operator is rostering their cabin crew within minutes of their maximum FDP. Any small issue will require Captain's discretion, as otherwise the crew would go out of hours. These issues aren't medical or other unforeseen circumstances, but the unrealistic flight and turnaround times my operator rosters their cabin crew with.

As an example, I was on a four sector day starting with a report time of 05:55 the day was long and we had a small delay into AAA which led us to be over 10 mins over our max FDP. It's not a lot, but because these things happen a lot and seem to become a pattern, they become a problem.

**Company Comment:** Thank you for reporting your concerns. We appreciate the importance a roster is to our cabin crew. When cabin crew report for their duty, they are reporting for the maximum flight duty period (FDP) for example a two-sector trip reporting at 9 am, the cabin crew can work up to 14 hours. Captain's discretion is used, when unforeseen factors out of the Captain's control start to erode on all of the crews' hours.

Cabin crew rosters are planned to a local scheduling agreement which contains an enhanced framework compared to the regulatory requirements such as sector duration, trip patterns, days off etc. We encourage our cabin crew to report roster concerns, whether potential or actual using a cabin safety report. Fatigue reports are reviewed in a separate meeting where trends are reviewed. When reports are submitted, this allows the various teams to investigate the rostering systems and determine whether any follow up or change is required.

**CAA Comment:** The use of commander's discretion is closely monitored by the CAA to identify those flights subject to higher levels of reporting and the contributing factors. High levels of discretion may result in changes to rostering.

**CHIRP Comment:** In recent months, CHIRP has received an increasing number of reports regarding the usage of the commander's discretion and the belief that it is being relied on in some rosters. Commander's discretion should not be used on a planned basis but is intended to be employed for those unplanned and unforeseen circumstances and delays that occur which would take the crew beyond their FDP limit. The use of commander's discretion is not a safety issue in itself provided it is managed properly.

CHIRP has presented these reports to the CAA in aggregate and has asked that they consider both reviewing the specific companies' policies on discretion and the reality of actual current rosters.

As a result, the CAA have focused some of their oversight activities for particular airlines in this area and have commented that there needs to be a better understanding of discretion within the industry overall. In recognising this, the CAA have recently published an open letter to operator's giving more detailed guidance and advice on what discretion is and the rules for its use which is now available on the CHIRP website: <https://chirp.co.uk/hot-topic/commanders-discretion/>

## Report No.7: CC6305 Experience Levels

**Report Text:** Called off airport standby, two other crew from airport standby were on their first operational flight having never flown before and completed one familiarisation/supernumerary flight. I questioned level of experience, was assured 4th crew member was classified as experienced.

When 4th crew member arrived I was informed that this was only their 5th flight with operator, but in 2018 had worked for another carrier for two months, but couldn't be sure how many flights they had done there. I rang the Management Team who assured me this counts as experienced. Just because a crew member holds an attestation from another carrier this is no proof of how many flights they have completed. I was assured that we met all the requirements and we were OK to operate. Captain was involved in the whole process. Flight was smooth and uneventful and I had no reason to doubt the ability of the other crew.

**Company Comment:** Our Planning and Crewing department track the experience levels of each individual crew member for every flight. As a result of an intense Cabin Crew recruitment phase, involving a lot of inexperienced crew joining, this has been tracked and complied with very carefully throughout the summer flying program.

Inevitably there are occasions where the total crew compliment meets the experience requirements (as in this reported case), but questions are raised on the day. On these occasions, the Senior Cabin Crew are empowered to call Crewing and request an additional experienced crew to join their flight from SBY. This procedure, designed to support our crew members, was introduced via a Crew Bulletin on 10/5/2023. At the time of this incident, the policy applied to A321 flights only, however as a result of this report, extending the policy to A320 flights is now under review.

**CAA Comment:** Operators are required to establish a process in accordance with AMC1 ORO.CC.100 to ensure the rostering of experienced cabin crew to flights. Whilst there is nothing that prevents an operator from taking account of previous experience, a cabin crew attestation alone is not evidence.

**CHIRP Comment:** AMC1 ORO.CC.100 states: when scheduling cabin crew for a flight, the operator should establish procedures that take account of the experience of each cabin crew member. The procedures should specify that the required cabin crew includes some cabin crew members who have at least 3 months experience as an operating cabin crew member.

Some operators stipulate in their operations manual an additional experienced crew member is required however, some operators do not, technically as long as one crew member is experienced on board then that meets regulatory requirements.

It can be more challenging to operate on an aircraft with an inexperienced crew than one with an experienced crew, and CHIRP is sympathetic to the crew in that circumstance. Naturally, experienced crew should assist new crew members whenever feasible, as we were all new once.

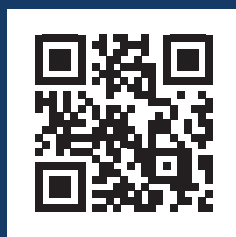
Since all new crew members have undergone intense training, one could counter that, from the standpoint of an emergency, someone who has just finished their training is more familiar with the emergency procedure than someone who is about to have their annual recurrent; however, even though they may have received recent training, they may not be as confident in using these procedures. Keep in mind that safety comes first, so any service-related tasks should come after any safety-related tasks. If the senior needs to change the in-flight service to reflect this, they should document the reason why so that the operator can monitor their reports for trends.

The CHIRP Aviation Programme also provides a facility for confidential reporting of Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Victimisation (BHDV) where there is an identifiable safety-related concern. CHIRP has no specific expertise or resources to investigate BHDV reports. CHIRP's role is to aggregate data to build a picture of the prevalence of BHDV in the aviation sector. See our BHDV page on the CHIRP website for further information. CHIRP's role in reporting Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Victimisation (BHDV)

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