



SUBMIT A REPORT

CHIRP always protects the identity of our reporters. All personal details are deleted from our system once a report is completed.

ONLINE

Reports can be submitted easily through our encrypted online form www.chirp.co.uk/aviation/submit-a-report



CHIRP's history of confidential safety reporting

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William Dean
Air Transport Programme Manager

"I didn't know that!"

Having recently had the pleasure of presenting to a number of aviation safety conferences about

CHIRP's role in promoting UK aviation safety, I became aware that many in the audience had little previous knowledge about CHIRP's formation as well as aspects of its remit and organisational

structure, hence the 'I didn't know that' response from many. I thought it would be beneficial if FEEDBACK provided a summary and reminder of CHIRP's background and remit for our readers too.

The CHIRP acronym stands for Confidential Human Factors Information Reporting Programme, and the organisation was established in 1982 as a joint initiative between the CAA and the RAF Institute of Aviation Medicine (IAM), initially closely modelled on the US Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS), created in 1976, and run by NASA, as it is today. CHIRP soon developed its own response to reports, focussing on direct communication with the reporter, and with relevant stakeholders on reporters' behalf, to help resolve issues if and when possible, but also to learn as much as possible from the reports and to publicise widely. The first edition of CHIRP FEEDBACK was published in December 1982.

The organisation has no statutory authority which means that the reporting of confidential human factors focused information to CHIRP is purely voluntary. In contrast, military aviators are mandated to report all potential hazards, near misses & minor incidents, as well as more serious accidents, to the MAA Aviation Safety Information Management System (ASIMS).

In 1994 an independent review of CHIRP was undertaken by the Guild of Air Pilots and Navigators (GAPAN) – now the Honourable Company of Air Pilots – which led to a major restructuring to better address human factors in accidents. A few years later, on 1 November 1996, the CHIRP Charitable Trust was incorporated to ensure full independence from regulators and employers, and this organisational autonomy still exists today, providing a strong, 30-year history, of independence from both regulators and stakeholder organisations (airlines, airports etc). However, it is important to state that funding for CHIRP's aviation safety activities is provided by UK Department for Transport, via CAA, in contrast to CHIRP's maritime confidential reporting, which became another key focus for CHIRP in 2003, which is primarily funded by the maritime industry, but also receives some DfT funding.

CHIRP operates as a "safety net" for reports that may otherwise not get written and whilst the CAA's requirements for Mandatory Occurrence Reporting (MOR) and Voluntary Occurrence Reporting (VOR) are well defined, CHIRP exists in part to provide an alternative route of reporting for individuals who feel they cannot report every aspect through official company channels. Reports to CHIRP are "de-identified" (personal details, place of work, location etc will all be removed) before being analysed by CHIRP's Advisory Boards, made up of industry experts, who collectively act as the reporters' advocate, discussing issues, via CHIRP programme managers, with relevant stakeholders. A select

number of the reports received are what you read in AT FEEDBACK.

As well as Commercial Air Transport (CAT) the following areas were added to CHIRP's remit as capacity steadily increased:

- **1997:** Licensed engineers and maintenance organisations
- **1999:** The wider General Aviation (GA) sector, including display flying
- **2001:** Commercial Air Transport (CAT) cabin crew
- **2019:** Drone and Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) operators

CHIRP's regulatory touch point is CAA CAP 1180:

CAP 1180 – UK State Safety Programme – acknowledges CHIRP as the provider of the UK's Independent Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting scheme.

More broadly, CHIRP is a member of the International Confidential Aviation Reporting Systems (ICASS) Group, which meets yearly to discuss issues concerning confidentiality and safety reporting and to share best practice. [ICASS – International Confidential Aviation Safety Systems Group – CHIRP](#)

The principal objectives of the ICASS Group are:

- To provide advice and assistance in the start-up and operation of a confidential reporting system.
- To facilitate the exchange of safety related information between independent confidential aviation reporting systems.
- To identify solutions to common problems in the operation of such systems.

ICASS Group Membership:

[AUSTRALIA](#) – REPCON (formally CAIR) [2006]

[BRAZIL](#) -Confidential Flight Safety Report (RCSV) [1997]

[CANADA](#) -Confidential Aviation Safety Reporting Program (CASRP) [1985-95] replaced by SECURITAS [1995-present]

[CENTRAL AMERICAS](#) -Central American Corporation for Air Navigation Services (COCESNA-ACSA) [1960]

[CHINA](#) -Sino Confidential Aviation Safety System (SCASS) [2005]

[EASA](#) -European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), Safety Investigation Section [2003]

JAPAN -Aviation Safety Information Network (ASI-NET) [1999-2013] replaced by VOICES [2014]

KOREA -Korean confidential Aviation Incident Reporting System (KAIRS)[2000]

SINGAPORE – SINGapore Confidential Aviation Incident Reporting (SINCAIR) [2004] replaced by Tell Sarah [2020]

SPAIN – Safety Reporting System (SRS) [2007]

SOUTH AFRICA – Confidential Aviation Hazard Reporting System (CAHRS) [2013]

TAIWAN – Taiwan Confidential Aviation Safety Reporting system (TACARE) [2000]

UNITED KINGDOM -Confidential Human Incident Reporting Programme (CHIRP) [1982]

UNITED STATES -Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS) [1976]

We hope this has been a useful overview of CHIRP’s history and remit and wish readers a safe and rewarding start to the ever-busy summer season, this year highlighted by significant geo-political uncertainty with several wars ongoing in the Middle East at the time of writing which is having major impacts on the world-wide commercial air traffic industry.

William Dean,
Air Transport (AT) & Advanced Air Mobility (AAM)
Programme Manager

For all CHIRP Aviation Team, see [CHIRP bios](#).

Engineering Editorial

As this is the first ATFB of 2026, it seems an opportune time to briefly reflect on CHIRP Engineering activity in 2025. My predecessor, Phil Young, and I dealt with a total of eighteen reports in the last year. With this small sample size, it is not easy to identify key themes.

However, two issues do stand out:

1. The tension between operational priorities and quality standards.

Reporters commented on how they had felt pressured to compromise safety or overlook quality concerns to meet operational, scheduling, or commercial targets. In several cases, this pressure appeared to stem from tight turnaround

times or aircraft availability demands. Such conditions could both inhibit effective challenge and discourage the internal reporting of concerns.

2. Concerns about the shortage of qualified licensed engineers in the industry.

Reporters highlighted how ongoing shortages have increased workloads for existing staff and reduced the time available for mentoring and supervision. Reporters also commented on how the perceived drop in training and assessment because of this shortage has raised concerns about the quality standards of new entrants.

It will be interesting to see if these themes continue in 2026, or if new issues are raised to CHIRP.

Kuldeep Nothey,
Engineering Programme Manager

New CHIRP Director Aviation

Nicky Smith, CHIRP’s former Director Aviation, departed at the end of December last year to pursue exciting opportunities and we know that whatever she chooses to get involved with can only add to her impressive aviation career to date. All of us thank her for the hard work and dedication she put into the role.

Nicky’s replacement is Richard Harrison, who joined the CHIRP aviation team in April 2026, and a copy of his bio is found here: [Team – CHIRP](#)

A warm welcome Rich!

Feedback on FEEDBACK

What do you think? We’d love to get your views on the topics covered in FEEDBACK. We don’t claim to have all the good ideas, and we may have missed something that relates to a report so please do contact us and give us your views. You never know, your thoughts might inspire the next editorial or perhaps give us more context for when we contact organisations and companies. Please send any comments to mail@chirp.co.uk for the attention of CHIRP Air Transport Programme Manager and we can start a conversation.

Report to CHIRP!

Have you had an incident or a near miss? Could CHIRP help or offer advice on a safety concern? Perhaps you've experienced or observed something with a human factors angle that you think the wider aviation community could learn from. Why not report it to CHIRP?

Every report helps raise awareness of safety issues, highlights emerging trends and shares valuable lessons with others. Report by report, we can all contribute to making aviation safer – as our strapline says:

“You report it, we help sort it.”

Reporting to CHIRP is simple and quick using either our [website](#) portal or the CHIRP App (scan the relevant QR code or search for ‘CHIRP Aviation’ but watch out for the birdsong Apps!). The portal presents a series of fields for you to complete, but not every field is mandatory – just tell us as much as you can. The more detail you provide, the more helpful we can be.

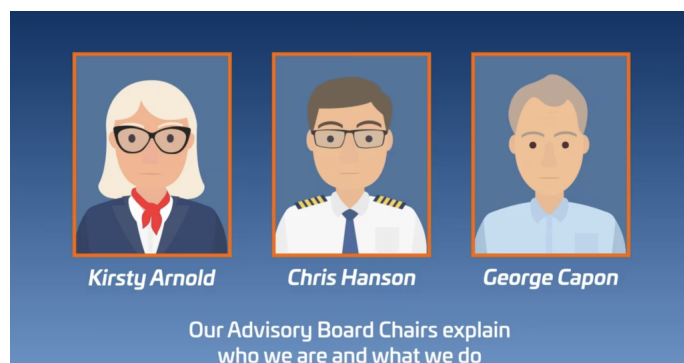
Although you'll be asked for an email address to access the system (to screen out bots and spam), your personal information is held securely within CHIRP's independent systems and is never shared outside the organisation. Importantly, nothing that could identify a reporter is included in any report we progress or publish. We liaise with you at every stage and no information is passed on without your express consent.

So rather than ‘fly and forget’, please consider working with CHIRP to help make the skies safer for everyone. However, it's important to note that reporting to CHIRP is not a substitute for submitting a Mandatory Occurrence Report (MOR) when required, for example, when there has been a significant risk to safety, or an event that could have endangered the aircraft, its occupants, or others. MORs should be submitted via the CAA's [ECCAIRS 2 portal](#).



CHIRP, what's it all about?

Here is a reminder about our short video (10mins) explaining what CHIRP does, voiced over by 3 of our Advisory Board Chairs. Click on this [link](#) to have a look and find out what we're all about.



I Learnt About Human Factors From This (ILAHFFT)

Below is a contribution from a CHIRP Air Transport FEEDBACK reader of many years standing who has recently retired from commercial airline flying and wanted to share some thoughts on flight safety built over an impressive flying career spanning 47 years.



Well, it's finally time to retire. There have been many, many changes during my career in the 'what, where, when and how' of aviation. Sometimes it's been hard to keep up. I have no doubt that Crew Resource Management (CRM) revolutionised teamwork in the 1980s and 1990s, while technological advances such as increased use of automation added powerful layers of protection. Whilst these two pillars, (human and technical), have formed the foundations of modern aviation

safety, and if one assumes that flight safety is a three-legged stool, then the missing leg is culture: the values, behaviours, and trust that sustain learning when things go wrong. It is my thoughts on culture in particular that I want to share with CHIRP readers as I finish my commercial aviation career.

A robust Just Culture, embedded within an effective organisational safety culture, provides that third leg. It ensures that errors are reported, not hidden; that learning replaces fear; but the trust, derived from feeling that there is a Just Culture, remains the invisible scaffolding beneath safety performance. When reports dry up, the pressure builds untilIn aviation we have 'skin in the game', unlike many other High Reliability Organisations (HRO's), such as medicine, and that should sustain and motivate our reporting culture but during my lifetime we peaked, I feel, in around 2018/19 in both the number of accidents and our engagement with the safety process. Since we returned from Covid-19 things feel different, we lost a lot of experience and some of the Swiss cheese holes feel bigger and maybe there are fewer slices of cheese? If reporting dwindles whilst the heat and pressures at work continue to rise, then the result is inevitable.

During my 23 plus years as a commercial captain, I've had and felt all types of pressure. I've been a Union representative so my exposure has been more than most to what those pressures look like and what the results can be. Making 65 in one piece in this industry feels like a win and not the norm.

I have submitted several reports to CHIRP over the years as a means of "letting off steam" – think FTL's, fuel carriage, commercial pressure, training, empowerment. It helped greatly but the heat (work, life, family etc) continued. Whilst confidential reporting takes the weight off the pressure cooker and allows us to "vent", the heat continues. Any decent FRMS/ Data Analysis would be able to spot the hot spots and do something about them provided there is enough data and the organisational will to analyse and provide feedback to the individuals reporting. Only identification of the heat (reporting) can then be balanced by analysis, feedback and ultimately safety. Identification and reporting by any means is our part of the contract and analysis, feedback and a focus on safety are those to whom we report.

My parting wish is that we continue to report and if your company does not make that easy you must inform them. If they don't listen, tell CHIRP, and consider too the CAA and your Union. For organisations, I say "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence" no matter how tempting this can be. Zero reports => safety is working – is a fallacy.

May I wish you all a great career and enjoy it moment by moment as it's age expired far too soon, sadly.



**WE NEED
YOU!**

We need your ILAHFFT stories!

The value of ILAHFFT is that it provides insights from those who have been there, done it, and have lessons for all of us to learn. If you have any anecdotes or amusing 'there I was...' stories then please do share them with us so that we can pass on the messages and inform others (ideally in a light-hearted and engaging manner). Send any interesting tales to mail@chirp.co.uk and put ILAHFFT in the subject header – we promise full confidentiality to protect the innocent (and not so innocent!).

Reports

Report No1 - FC5406 – Reporting system not fit for purpose

Initial Report

On several occasions now I have submitted an Air Safety Report (ASR) through my airline's dedicated App on my company iPad. The App has a known bug to completely lose the report and not submit it. This bug has been there for years and therefore when you contact the safety team, they provide a detailed IT 'workaround' which is copy and pasted, however that requires the report to be started from scratch. A recent report of mine containing detailed technical information was lost and I cannot rewrite it from memory, at home. This report has been lost forever. This is not the first time it has happened to me. The App is not fit for purpose and there is no action to rectify the issue. I am also concerned that mandatory occurrence reports that may be required to submit to the regulator may be lost as the integrity of the system is questionable. Furthermore, upon later checking successfully submitted reports, I noted that they appear closed despite me not receiving any feedback, even basic feedback indicating that they would not be investigated and confirming they are closed. When I contact the safety team, I receive a response indicating my email would be forwarded to the Investigator but without disclosing who they are, and I don't receive anything further. My confidence in the entire system has been lost.

Company Comment

I am sorry to hear that your reporter has had issues with the App, we have a very healthy reporting culture and receive positive feedback, and this has been enhanced as now all of our crew have an iPad with the App installed (this was previously only available to pilots and senior crew members).

Our people across the organisation are able to report safety issues into our system via the desktop / web browser version, or in addition our crew can use the App which is installed on their company issued iPads. The App can be used for reporting

both online and offline (when reports are then submitted once the iPad is once again online).

As with all systems, on occasion IT issues can be experienced, these are few and far between, however in this case we request that they are reported via our IT support platform or to the team who manage the system. With regard to the reporter not receiving feedback following submission of safety reports, feedback is sent by the system automatically or by an investigator (depending upon the type of incident reported) for every report submitted and so I would be very keen to understand where the reporter has not seen this. Maintaining confidence in our reporting system is essential.

CHIRP Comment

The airline concerned, as well as providing the response to CHIRP given above, also offered to speak with the reporter directly, but they declined to take up the offer. One way to ensure important safety information is kept available for future reference, in case an App has periods of poor functionality such as in this report, is to consider initially writing the report in Word or Email and keep a copy, as well as using App. This does, however, put more onus on the reporter to make up for short falls in App reliability and it is the airline's responsibility to ensure flight crews and other employees are able to easily and confidently submit internal safety reports.

Report No2 - FC5407 – Fatigue

Initial Report

I work for a major UK airline, and my concern is the work rostered and time off in between trips. For example, in recent months I have been rostered 10 trips with only two days off in between them. Out of the 10 trips six of them were two crew three-day trips. I managed to swap one of them to generate three days off for a three-crew heavy trip. In my opinion, this pattern is unsustainable and simply too tiring. I will be calling in unfit if I feel too fatigued to fly. Have emailed the company and raised [a safety report] about potential fatigue. If this issue is not addressed more crew will go fatigued call in sick or there will be an incident or safety lapses as we are so tired.

Company Comment

We have a comprehensive programme of strategic initiatives underway and one of the areas of focus has been rostering, and we have recently announced a number of significant changes. We are grateful for open reporting of fatigue and rostering issues as this provides the fatigue management process with the required insight to drive change, as has happened in this case. Specifically in relation to the reporter's scenario, there has been an increase in days off at base on

certain routes of a certain duration. We are also looking at rostering improvements for other routes, but these have yet to be announced.

CHIRP Comment

CHIRP has been working on a number of reports from flight crew at this airline and the company's recent changes in the number of days off at base between certain rostered flights, as outlined by the airline above, has addressed the main concerns raised by our reporters. CHIRP continues to encourage strongly staff to report to their airline all fatigue-related incidents and potential hazards so that information and data can be captured to support positive change

Report No3 - FC5410 – Pressurised to report early

Initial Report

Reported by experienced flight crew member.

Security down to one lane at the staff search in [Location]. Social media post asking crew to allow extra time. Our reporting time is -60/75 (depending on check-in time) at the back of the security queue. New crew/pilots, and more likely cabin crew, may feel pressure to report early due to the security congestion. This could put crew into a new more restrictive FDP period or report before having 12 hours rest. Social media text received by crew was: "Good morning, there is only 1 lane open at security this morning. This is causing long queues please allow extra time. Have a lovely day everyone"

Company Comment

The incident reported was isolated and was not intended to pressurise any crew member to report early or to compromise required rest periods. The message posted on [social media] was shared purely for situational awareness in response to an unexpected security bottleneck, with the aim of maintaining transparent communication. The intention was to ensure crew were aware of potential delays so they could plan their journeys appropriately, reduce stress on arrival, and avoid last minute congestion at staff search.

At no point was there an expectation or request for crew to report ahead of their official report time, nor to shorten their mandated rest periods. Crew are fully trusted to manage their report times in line with legal FDP limits and required rest, and the communication was intended to support—not influence—those decisions.

Online communication channels are used to promote awareness and wellbeing, not to direct operational behaviour or alter reporting expectations. However, we acknowledge that newer crew or those less familiar with operational processes may occasionally misinterpret such updates as encouragement to arrive earlier. We would like to reassure that the safety and wellbeing of our crew remain our priority, and we do not expect any crew member to report before completing their legal rest (unless an adjustment has been agreed in advance between the crew member). All scheduled report times remain unchanged, and any updates posted by base management teams are for awareness only, not a request for early arrival. Our ongoing goal is to support crew wellbeing by keeping all communication open, clear, and non-directive when sharing any ad hoc operational messages.

CHIRP Comment

When disruption occurs, operators may benefit from using quick methods of communication channels, such as closed social media platforms, to advise crew to allow sufficient time to navigate known issues, including security delays. For some crew members, this will be seen as timely and helpful information. However, from other crew members' perspective, whilst the airline may be encouraging crew to plan ahead and the messages are well intentioned, care is needed to ensure this does not unintentionally create pressure to report earlier than required. Reporting times are defined for a reason and form part of the wider fatigue management framework, including ensuring adequate rest prior to duty.

Report No4 - FC5413 – What is maximum acceptable cabin temperature for boarding passengers?

Initial Report

Aircraft was presented for service in a hot climate with an unserviceable APU. Cabin temperatures reaching high 30s and station staff proposal was to "board and get underway". There is no upper limit for an acceptable cabin temperature for humans whereas I understand livestock do have limits. As such a number of us have researched the matter and deemed 25 deg is a reasonable limit. On this aeroplane it is possible to use the air start units to power the packs, but the station staff initially refused as it usually caused the air starter to overheat! Given the alternative of service cancellation, they ran it in ten-minute stretches which did reduce the temperature. Fuelling and most of cargo loading complete I decided to allow boarding as the station had 'proactively' loaded the customers to the jetty [without air-conditioning provided], against my instructions, and they assured me boarding would only take ten minutes.

Boarding took 25 minutes and later in the flight an elderly customer presented with symptoms of a heart attack, his wife suggesting he can get this associated with heat related stress.

CHIRP Comment

CHIRP contacted the CAA for a response to this report, as the reporter raised a serious concern regarding passenger as well as crew safety. [The CAA medical department] informs us that there is no legislation stating a maximum temperature for aircraft cabins. Aircraft cabins are typically maintained between 22 deg C and 24 deg C and this is for passenger comfort as well as to mitigate risks from dehydration and fainting at high altitudes. In comparison, FAA too only provides general guidelines but no limits. Some airlines provide specific temperature standards that are to be set by pilots and /or flight attendants that have control over the settings. When temperature become an issue inside the cabin, due to situations as described in this report, it is ultimately down to passengers to have adequate hydration available in order to stay comfortable and safe, particularly after the seat belt sign is illuminated and cabin has been prepared for take-off.

Report No5 - FC5414 – Insufficient rest between trips

Initial Report

The company again reduced rest periods on trip patterns and works against agreements to get a program through the summer which they can't due to bad establishment planning. The two pilot, with only one night down route is a potential safety risk especially during the summer when it's storm season [at location]. This needs to be changed to two nights or three pilots asap. It massively adds to the fatigue of already very tiring rosters with so many two pilot, one nights being rostered with min days off and 5 trips a month. Also planning west, east, west, east adds to the fatigue, more consideration of rostering flights west, west and then east, east would help.

If the CAA is not stopping the airlines from using flight time limitations as targets for rostering instead of limitations nothing will ever change.

CHIRP Comment

See FC5407, but noting this report concerns a different airline. As this reporter did, CHIRP continues to encourage strongly staff to report to their airline all fatigue-related incidents and potential hazards so that information and data can be captured to support positive change, as is happening with some airlines and associated roster changes. It is recognised that always having to report incidents induces report fatigue, however, the

penultimate paragraph of the ILAHFFT entry from this FEEDBACK edition is also relevant to this discussion.

Report No6 - FC5415 – Insufficient crew food provided

Initial Report

Regularly the food supplied by [Airline] is not sufficient for the length of duty. For example, my last duty started at 0500 UTC and finished at 1430 UTC, representing 9.5 hours of duty time. The food supplied for that duty per pilot were:

1 x Oat Burst porridge pot

1 x Croissant or Pain au chocolate

1 x penguin chocolate bar

1.5 x apples

Plus 1 extra pack of 3 biscuits to share.

This effectively needs to cover a breakfast and lunch period and is insufficient calories for the length of time.

The crew food is loaded in the morning, it often gets consumed through the day, because each crew does not have enough. Therefore, by the evening flights there is often no food at all. Our alternate procedure is to have passenger food which also runs out through the day. For my last five late shifts I was provided with nothing more substantial than a KitKat and some Pringles.

CAA Comment

The medical advice is that aviation safety professionals maintain a balanced diet and follow the guidance provided in documents like the ICAO 'Fitness to Fly' publication, Chapter 6, Nutrition and Weight management. Individual calorie requirements are variable with males requiring about 2500 calories per day and females about 2000. The flying task is, in relative terms, towards sedentary, and the aeromedical risk is more one of overeating and obesity rather than the opposite. In-flight rations obviously stave off hunger and perhaps boredom and have their origins with high calorie, sugar rich foods provided to military aircrew. Pilots should eat and hydrate themselves to maintain a healthy weight and ensure that they are fit to carry out their duties.

CHIRP Comment

Not all airlines provide food for crew because it is not a regulatory requirement to do so, and when they do it, it is

usually based on individual industrial agreements. In previous CHIRP discussions many pilots have shared their views about the poor quality of in-flight rations. CHIRP also receives reports from flight crew, working for those airlines that do provide "rations", stating that there is insufficient hygienic storage for the food that the crew provide themselves and which is intended for the rostered duty so may be unhygienic if left in ambient flight deck temperatures. Hence, lack of refrigeration and even basic storage facilities are other common concerns from our reporters.

Report No7 - FC5416 – Fasting for religious observance whilst operating as crew

Initial Report

Whilst operating in the cruise, a cabin crew member came in to say hello. They declared they were fasting for religious reasons. Having worked in different parts of the world I asked when they last ate or drank water, the answer being "around 0500 UK time". The time was now around 1800 UK and therefore the crew member hadn't eaten or drunk anything for 13 hours!

I have safety concerns as the captain of the aircraft with 260 passengers onboard. The cabin crew cannot be hydrated without water for 13 hours. Mentally and physically, this is not good. I'm aware that fasting of food can benefit us at times, but fasting without water all day will impair our judgement.

My airline needs a policy on this. Thanks.

Company Comment

We recognise the sensitivity this report may have had for the reporter, and the airline has used the opportunity to review and enhance internal guidance related to fasting and the performance of safety critical roles.

CHIRP Comment

Religious fasting is a choice that should be open to all, without fear or favour. However, individual crews are required to ensure that they are fit to fly at all times during a flight in order to discharge their duties competently and professionally. This includes being adequately nourished and hydrated. Therefore, it is acceptable for crew to fast for religious purposes, but it is often discouraged in safety critical industries due to safety concerns associated with hydration. Some airlines, but not all, have specific policies that cover the subject in their Ops Manual. A crewmember may therefore choose to fast if they feel capable of operating safely. However, fasting can lead to impaired cognitive function and fatigue posing a risk to the individual as well as other crew and passengers, so it's both a

personal and safety-related decision that should involve airline approval and personal/professional judgement. This is especially the case on long haul flights when the adverse effects of dehydration will be acutely felt due to the length of time in a fundamentally unfavourable environment for fasting. If your company doesn't have a specific policy, please submit an internal request that this is reviewed and updated with clearer policy wording, as happened in the case of the airline in question – see the Airline comment above.

Report No8 - FC5419 – Professional Standards and Attitude

Initial Report

Not intended as a rant – we were all young once and knew and appreciated less than we know now.

But – not infrequently I am reporting for duty and find myself being presented with a flight deck colleague who pitches up and immediately expresses strong and assertive opinions on a variety of work-related issues at the point of introduction in the crew room prior to briefing. New and worse staff car park arrangements, poor rosters, lack of progress on pay and terms and conditions improvement promises, new staff security search arrangements, lack of visible activity and interest from the union on the daily grind of short haul issues etc.

And associated with this strong verbalisation can be a strong personal confidence that doesn't quite match the level of flying experience. And doesn't initially show the care, consideration, caution and collaboration required in the profession in general that you'd hope to feel a sense of in a pilot colleague that you've never worked with before.

I'm usually not in disagreement with the issues expressed, but the way in which a First Officer colleague in the profession pitches up and expresses these views at the point of introduction to a complete stranger, and sometimes having turned up late, isn't the right way to start the working day as member of a close knit team whose focus should be the safe and efficient running of the day together.

It becomes a threat and a concern right at the start of the day. Is this colleague turning up to operate with the right frame of mind? Are they going to be able to fit into the team and play their role without distraction? Are they going to be a pain to work with if they are going to express strong opinions all day? Are they able to listen and process everything we have to brief on now and then execute through the day? Are they going to undermine the role of the captain? Do they really understand how the relationship works between the Captain and First Officer even in a shallow gradient environment? Do they

understand that these strong "background" conversations can become a significant threat to their own ability to operate at work and can easily affect and distract those that they are working closely with. And notwithstanding the fact that it is bordering on rude and intimidating behaviour on occasions.

You wonder whether the right people are being recruited into the role. You wonder whether they appreciate that they have entered a profession where the demands placed upon them are more than just for performing any "job". That they don't realise that there is a lot to put up with in the airline environment, that you have to show resilience and flexibility and be in the right frame of mind to operate safely, that you sometimes have to pitch up early and frequently do work related things in your own time, and that you have a clear responsibility to your work colleagues and passengers who you will be with on the day. The company is putting a lot of information across relating to professional standards currently and the need to take care in the operating environment to avoid slip ups. But both it and the union don't seem to quite appreciate the level of distraction current working environment issues are creating, and that sections of the pilot community aren't able to park these issues at report. And don't quite appreciate all the points about the professional behaviours required at work because they don't quite seem to appreciate that they have joined a profession and none of this stuff applies to them.

It's a joy when a calm and collected personable colleague pitches up for the day. And especially so if they've actually heard of Kegworth, Tenerife, etc and appreciate what risks are lurking out there. But it seems rarer these days? Maybe it's just me out of touch.

Company Comment

This is a useful report, and if this had been made even a year ago, the airline would have had less material to respond with. However, on a positive front, there is currently a change programme underway, jointly sponsored by [airline] and [union], with a remit to address many of the issues that appear to be agitating some pilots, such as this reporter.

Whilst the initiatives [currently being discussed and referred to above] are aimed at addressing the root causes of the agitation, [airline] still expects our crew to be able to compartmentalise these types of issues when operating and think in the vast majority of cases this will be the case. However, that said, the reporter appears to have "been around for a while" and is, therefore, a good bellwether of changing attitudes, culture etc. and for that [the airline] wishes to thank them for the CHIRP report.

CHIRP Comment

This report resulted in some interesting and varied discussions and CHIRP was pleased to have obtained a response from the airline that confirmed that raising the issue with them, on behalf of the reporter, provided a useful input to the safety team. Societal norms and other cultural influences will bring up such issues particularly when there is such a wide experience/age gap and only by reporting internally, as well as to CHIRP, will the safety concerns that result be able to be addressed in a professional manner.

Report No9 - FC5425 – Cost over Safety?

Initial Report

At [airline] it has always been the case that the flight planning department would plan and file the most cost-effective routing to destination. Historically however, they were always happy to amend as required on request of the flight crew if they considered there to be hazardous weather that could readily be avoided. Recently there seems to have been a change in the attitude toward amending routing to avoid weather and turbulence with a much greater emphasis on flying the least cost routing. Having discussed the matter with other crews, I know that I am not alone in my experiences on this. For example, [during a recent trip when I made such a request], it was initially refused as it would be more expensive in overflight charges, even after it was pointed out that the request was being made for safety reasons. After asking to speak to shift manager, again emphasising the reason for route amendment there was still much resistance to make the requested changes. Only after insisting that the route be

amended did they reluctantly do so. It's very disappointing that an airline which otherwise has an excellent attitude to flight safety falls short in this instance, and some crew could easily find themselves pressurised by a cost driven department to put the aircraft in a [potentially] hazardous environment that could readily be avoided.

I'm confident that I would not be subject to any punitive or unfair treatment, but having spoken with my local management team, although understanding of my issue, they suggested it is something that would unlikely change and I would just need to continue being assertive of my position when required in these instances.

CHIRP Comment

CHIRP understands the reporter's frustration at witnessing a change in policy to such requests for alternative routing based on adverse weather forecasts. CHIRP is also aware that for many captains, the preferred option is to accept the route planned in the knowledge that the route and associated contingency fuel is based on technological input and statistical based data. If the weather is worse than forecast then the captain has the option to re-route, coordinated with ATC, and based on weather actuals and in some cases after communication with other crews flying in the same piece of airspace. Ultimately, however, only the captain can determine the factors most critical to safety of their individual flight and with the information given.

The subject of how technology informs airline's route selection and fuel loading will be the subject of a future ATAB article/ editorial.

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