

CHIRP FEEDBACK

Issue No: 100

4/2011

SECURITY

STAFF SECURITY SEARCHES

Report Text: This is a typical experience of security at ZZZ (UK Airport). I was passing through staff security to start my normal shift when I was selected for special attention by a very officious security person.

I co-operated fully and during the search the guard removed my Nitrolingual pump-spray, saying I could not take it airside as it was not in a clear plastic bag. I told him he could not confiscate prescription medicines but he would not let me take it until I could find a plastic bag. Eventually a bag was found at which point the guard insisted that this item was re-x rayed.

At no point did I challenge the guard's authority. I have heart disease and the spray is administered under the tongue in case of heart attack or angina as the first line of treatment. Needless to say this incident left me extremely stressed and I attended my first aircraft of the day in this state, I subsequently suffered an angina attack and had to be relieved by a colleague. After sufficient rest I was able to continue my duties.

I conclude that my state of mind after this security incident was not conducive to the safe operation of aircraft, I reported the incident to my line manager, but it appears we have no course of redress to complain about security personnel. If we challenge them directly we are accused of being obstructive and are threatened with security pass removal. Every one of my colleagues can tell of similar incidents with ZZZ security, the vast majority go unreported.

The above report is a reminder that security concerns that impinge on flight safety continue to be reported to CHIRP. Regrettably, there has been to date no effective mechanism for reviewing/addressing these.

On 14 July 2011 the Department for Transport published a consultation document 'Better Regulation for Aviation Security' which proposes a number of changes in the delivery and oversight of aviation security in the UK. One of the proposals is to introduce a risk-based procedure for overseeing aviation security; as part of this it is proposed to introduce both mandatory and voluntary reporting systems. In the case of the latter, the DfT proposes to extend the scope of the CHIRP Programme to encompass aviation security concerns.

If this proposal is adopted, an independent, confidential reporting process will be established to permit security staff and other individuals to report concerns regarding the effectiveness/application of the procedures. These would be reviewed and, where necessary, addressed using a similar process to that for safety related issues.

The consultation document is published on the Department's website at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/dft-2011-21>.

It is important that if you who have concerns about any aspect of aviation security, you review the document and submit your comments, particularly if you support the proposed changes. The deadline for receipt by DfT is 7 November 2011.

Deputy Director (Engineering) - Vacancy

Due to the retirement of the current Deputy Director (Engineering) Mick Skinner in January 2012, the Trust is seeking a replacement for this part-time position.

Details of the role and how to apply are at Page 8.

ENGINEER REPORTS

MANUFACTURE VS FABRICATION OF PARTS

Report Text: During maintenance, a scheduled tail pylon replacement was carried out. The overhauled pylon structure is supplied with bushes for the tail-cone fittings and the matching pylon attachment fittings. The internal diameter (ID) of these bushes, as supplied, is undersize for line reaming at assembly.

I was not present at the time as I was on leave.

Apparently one or more, even all, of the original bushes were scrapped during assembly and replacement bushes were fabricated locally from Beryllium Copper Alloy (the bar stock supplied for the purpose of manufacturing the bushes carried a release certificate from Company Stores).

Having reviewed the approved documentation (Structural Repair Manual, Illustrated Parts Bulletin and two Service Bulletins), I am concerned as I do not believe that the scope of certificated maintenance approval allows the Company to engage in the manufacture of these items (or any manufacture at all, purely maintenance). I can find no reference to the manufacture of these bushes in any manufacturer's publication relating to the maintenance task. (Only line reaming post-installation approved).

If the internal diameter of the tail-cone fittings were previously oversized, this also could be a reason for making oversized bushes and, by definition, the integrity of the critical bolted joint could be compromised.

I was told that a locally hired trade assistant brought his own hobby lathe in to machine up these parts. No brush cadmium equipment is on site and there is a requirement to re-plate the hole/fitting when old bushes have been pressed out.

Lessons learned: An apparent willingness of the chain of command to initiate a "Do it yourself" ethos without due

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regard to process/procedure/involvement of the CAA to produce an (un)approved re-work, as noted by myself upon returning to work.

I questioned people involved "How did the pylon change go?" My query was met with some very guarded replies. The bar stock supplied came from the company stores suggesting that similar action may have been carried out on other airframes.

CHIRP Comment: The fabrication of certain parts under Part 145 is permitted provided approved procedures are followed.

In order to 'manufacture' parts an approval under Part 21 is required. However, the 'fabrication' of a limited scope of items under Part 145.A.42 (c) is permitted using approved data. A specific requirement is that fabricated parts must only be used to rectify a defect on an aircraft or component that is in work.

It is not permitted under Part 145 to fabricate parts for stock or resale and fabricated parts cannot be certified with an EASA Form 1 or equivalent.

The reporter's concerns were referred to the CAA. In subsequent discussions the company confirmed that the bushing fabrication described in the report was listed within the scope of Part 145 maintenance requirements and agreed to investigate the reporter's allegations that some of the required processes associated with the fabrication had not been available.

HF TRAINING FOR SUPPORT STAFF

Report Text: Who has to be HF (Human Factors) trained within the aviation environment? It would appear that our company chooses to take a selective view on their training requirements when it comes to HF training. Some whole departments are not HF trained within our company. To mention two: Information Technology (IT) and Human Resources (HR).

The claim from the company is that because they are not directly involved in aircraft maintenance, there is no requirement. The use of IT systems by aircraft maintenance personnel is constant and the continual frustration with the shortcomings of the systems does become a HF issue.

HR is another area within the company that can have a direct effect on the HF of aircraft maintenance personnel, but again no training.

This issue has been raised before by others within the organisation but they have been told to "Leave the issue alone".

Lessons learned: If the company is complying with the minimum regulations maybe the legislation should be revised or companies should be striving to exceed the regulations.

CHIRP Comment: Part 145 does not require staff in support departments such as HR and IT to undertake HF training.

However, it is important that the potential for error is captured in the definition, design and validation of new IT systems. Thus it may well be beneficial for IT staff who design and develop systems for use by engineers to have an appreciation of HF issues that can contribute to maintenance errors.

ATC REPORTS

LARS TRAFFIC SERVICE (FB98) - A COMMENT

Report Text: As a radar controller of many years standing and having provided a LARS service for a number of those years, I note with some considerable degree of concern your reply to the LARS Traffic Service report (FEEDBACK Issue 98; Page 8).

The provision of a Traffic Service is a radar service which rests one below the provision of a De-confliction Service in the order of priority. The making/receiving of a phone call does not remove the controller's responsibility of, nor does it prevent the controller from, scanning the radar screen. To give this as an answer undermines the integrity of the radar units who daily provide a professional Traffic Service to the very many pilots who fly in Class G airspace

CHIRP Comment: There was absolutely **no** intention to impugn the professionalism of ATCOs or the service that they provide. The purpose of our earlier comment was to emphasise the limitation on a controller's ability to pass traffic information under a Traffic Service that is promulgated in the ATSOCAS literature and also in CAP 493; Chapter 11; Para. 4.5.1.

We acknowledge that ATCOs will frequently exercise their duty of care by providing traffic information when not strictly required. However, there is ample evidence from Airprox and CHIRP reports that a significant number of GA pilots have an expectation that under a Traffic Service a warning of traffic will always be given by an ATCO, whereas this is not the case. The responsibility for collision avoidance and thus maintaining a good visual lookout whenever possible remains that of the pilot.

MANNING/WORKLOAD CONCERNS

Report Text: I am an experienced Air Traffic controller with more than 15 years experience. I am writing to report concerns among my colleagues at the way the unit management are already reducing staffing levels toward the numbers required when new working practices are introduced next year.

Staff numbers are now sometimes so low that vital operational tasks are not being carried out and undue pressure is placed on controllers to carry out the additional duties normally carried out by staff who are absent. For example, it is not unusual for an Approach controller to operate without an Assistant from 6pm in the evening until 6:30 am the following morning. This demands that the Approach controller carries out both his own functions and those of the Assistant, involving answering telephone queries, loading aircraft paper strips from the printer and co-ordinating other sundry tasks.

Similarly, there have been instances when there has been no Assistant to assist the Tower controller for the whole of the night shift. This leaves the controller carrying out Assistant duties including notifying pressure changes, answering telephone queries regarding flow, slot management, application of slots to departures, renegotiating slots for missed slots, queries from airlines and handling agents, accepting strips from the

printer and 'stripping up' for departures and arrivals, application of data from ramp control with regard to stand allocation, liaising with ramp staff etc. The list goes on.

This situation normally comes to a head when the early morning increase in traffic occurs and the complexity of the task increases. On a recent occasion the controller was too busy to co-ordinate all departures as well as issuing flight plan data to other departing aircraft. This led to large delays to both departures and arrivals and a very stressful environment in the Tower. The Unit has also been the subject of MORs being filed against it for aircraft which have departed without being co-ordinated.

The situation is frustrating for staff, who are available but are not being called in to cover numbers, and frustrating for controllers as the workload at a complex time is being hugely increased and becoming a source of stress to staff.

CHIRP Comment: The reporter's concerns were represented to the senior manager of the ATSU, who issued an invitation for the reporter to discuss the above concerns directly; however, this was declined. Following an investigation by the Unit manager, the response below was received:

The operational staffing levels have been agreed with the relevant representative bodies and have not changed in the last two years. New working practices will be negotiated and then introduced next year. There was one occasion earlier this year when no Air Traffic Assistant was available for a night shift, due to sickness. Every possibility of overtime and shift swaps was tried to cover the absence, but was ultimately unsuccessful. A review of this occasion established that no aircraft had missed their slots and inbound holding had been at normal levels. A review of MORs did not reveal any filed this year relating to departure airborne times not having been passed; however, one internal safety observation had been made.

All Assistant shortfalls due to sickness are offered as overtime. Where the sickness is known in advance the shifts are highlighted on the roster and anyone can volunteer. Where the sickness is short notice then off-duty staff are telephoned and offered overtime; however, this is voluntary. The function of securing people to cover shifts is an administration task, which is predominantly carried out from the Unit Admin office and so staff may not witness it happening, hence their perception.

FLIGHT CREW REPORTS

POOR RTF PHRASEOLOGY LEADS TO POOR SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Report Text: I am an experienced Captain with a regional airline based in the UK, and have frequently witnessed examples of very poor and ambiguous RT by non-UK commercial air transport aircraft flown in our skies. Several days ago I heard the worst example with a very high safety risk in my opinion. The following account has been MOR'd via the usual channels, but perhaps CHIRP might widen the audience.

We had been approaching AAA (UK regional airport) from the North, being followed several miles behind by an aircraft callsign 'XYZ 123'. Numerous transmissions were heard which were not at all standard, although the meaning could be 'worked out' including calls such as, '**Passing seven for four**' (What?.....Flight level?.....thousands of feet?.... four four?)

Mode 'S' gives the controller the ability to check cleared level set on the aircraft's systems. However, the listening audience of other aircraft do not have this benefit and lose the vital situational awareness of monitoring the bigger picture by good listening out.

The call that led to me banging this drum was the initial call to AAA Tower when transferred by Director: '**XYZ 123 lined up runway ##**'.

At this point we were on a two-mile final for the runway, and if taken as it was said, would believe that we were about to land on an occupied runway.

On this day at this time we had the benefit of having followed the subject aircraft's previous messages and knew where he really was (established on the localiser behind us and also had good visual contact with the runway. However, without this knowledge and in poor weather we would have been going around without any doubt.

Interestingly the call was accepted by ATC without any query and acknowledged without correction.

There must be several examples each day of similar things happening, and I am concerned.

CHIRP Comment: This report emphasises the importance of always using correct RTF phraseology and the confusion that may otherwise arise.

In relation to the reporter's reference to Mode 'S' readouts, it is relevant to note that ATCOs are not mandated to check/validate the Mode 'S' data that is available to them. If you are unsure as to your cleared altitude/level, always confirm the clearance with ATC.

"READY IMMEDIATE?" PROBLEMS

Report Text: This is the second occurrence of this type with this ATC unit, which seems to have a few 'local practices' (such as reading back the runway-in-use as well as QNH and ATIS letter, which seems to avoid the point of ATIS and brevity in RTF transmissions); these no doubt come from previous incidents/experience.

However, I have on a number of occasions encountered another local practice; on being asked if we are ready for immediate departure, we are then given a set of conditions which affect the earlier decision and would have been nice to have known before answering. Add that to the fact these conditions vary from our prior clearance AND come to us during the line-up checklist (which we are trying to get done to be expeditious) and you have the firm beginnings of an error chain.

On the first occasion (reported to the company - but no reply has been forthcoming) we received our usual departure/airway clearance. At the hold, we were asked if we were "Ready immediate" and said we were - the taxi checklist being complete. Given line-up clearance I began the line-up checklist (such items as removal of gust-lock, full and free check of controls, transponder

on, final FMP mode selection and engine/navaid departure tracking checks etc). This was interrupted by "Can you see the helicopter on climb-out?" "No" was my answer due to snowfall and low cloud. This irritated ATC as we were lined-up against landing traffic. Fortunately, we then saw the helicopter turning through a break in the cloud and were able to depart without causing a go-around (but with a hurried checklist). This left both of us agreeing we had felt a bit "behind the curve" on departure.

The second, more recent incident followed the same pattern with a "Maintain runway heading"/varied level off instruction to our previous clearance during the line-up checklist phase.

1. It is to my mind dangerous to interrupt/vary clearances during line-up - it should be done beforehand.
2. "Safe and expeditious" - ATC need to consider if both are always possible.
3. ALL information needs to be available in order to make a decision as to whether we are ready immediate.

I accept that the controllers may not be aware that they are interrupting a critical checklist and if this is the case, I hope this report will assist them in deciding when to issue a variation to a clearance and when considering if we should be asked if we are "Ready immediate".

CHIRP Comment: This report is a reminder to ATCOs that late clearance amendments can be a distraction at what can be a busy time. Similarly, several points in this report are worth clarifying from an ATC perspective.

The first is that when issued with a "Cleared for immediate take off" at the holding point ATC expect an aircraft to taxi immediately on the runway and commence the take off without stopping the aircraft. The number of checklist items required to be completed on the runway varies between aircraft types; however, ATC will not be aware of this. If your line-up SOPs require you to stop/delay on the runway, don't accept the offer of an 'immediate take off' clearance.

The second is that the Manual of Air Traffic Services - Part 1 and CAP413 - Radio Telephony Manual specify the information that is required to be read-back by pilots; this includes the runway-in-use. [CAP413; Chapter 2; Para. 1.14.5]

The third is that if a controller has information relating to traffic close to the climb-out flight path that he/she is required to pass to an aircraft preparing to take off, he/she may prefer to wait until the aircraft is facing the direction in which the traffic can be seen.

A final point; if having accepted an ATC clearance, something occurs which might put you under undue pressure make ATC aware that you are no longer able to comply.

LACK OF PRIMARY RADAR

Report Text: I operate out of an airport without any controlled airspace, only an Air Traffic Zone (ATZ). On several occasions recently we have been advised by

NOTAM that the primary radar has been switched off due to maintenance.

Before departing we, as operating crew, have discussed the situation. After departure we have a period of time before we reach the airway and our company procedures require us to obtain the best radar service possible. Therefore, whenever possible we request a De-confliction Service from leaving the ATZ until we reach the airway.

Over the past few months the primary radar has been off on several occasions and on departure we receive, "a reduced De-confliction Service against transponding aircraft only" On occasions we depart towards two uncontrolled GA airfields not to mention rapidly climbing into IMC conditions.

The airport has seen large growth over the last few years and on many occasions we end up taking last minute large heading changes to avoid other traffic that is transiting east of the instrument approach. On numerous occasions there is no TCAS return visible on our aircraft.

The TCAS system works only with aircraft fitted with transponders. It seems only a matter of time before we have an Airprox with another aircraft especially with the primary radar having been turned off more frequently due to maintenance

Lessons Learned:

1. The airport requires some controlled airspace to link it to the airway.
2. Rather than keep repairing the radar perhaps it's time to replace it!

CHIRP Comment: This report was referred to CAA (SRG) Air Traffic and Aerodrome Standards Division.

Subsequent discussions between the CAA and the ATSU management confirmed that the ATSU policy was to mitigate operations with the radar withdrawn from service by best practice scheduling of routine maintenance to avoid periods of busy commercial air transport (CAT) operations.

However, the primary radar was a single channel design with no channel redundancy, unlike many other airports; consequently, most maintenance activities resulted in withdrawal of the operational primary radar service. A review of the operational service record had confirmed that there had been a considerable number of outages in a four-month period, which had been due to faults as opposed to scheduled routine maintenance. A major component had been suspected of causing this poor reliability, but it had taken some time to confirm this. With the assistance of the radar manufacturer, the cause was eventually confirmed and the component replaced; service outages since had been minimal with routine maintenance being conducted to avoid peak periods of CAT operations.

The need to continue with the airport's established practice of scheduling planned maintenance to avoid periods of busy commercial air transport (CAT) operations had been emphasised.

It is understood that the airport's development plans include the replacement of the primary radar.

A CAUTIONARY TALE (1)

Report Text: I accepted an agency offer of a three-month contract with a non-EU start-up corporate operator. The initial task was to position the aircraft to which the aircraft, a corporate twin jet, had been ferried by the previous owner's crew and then position it, with the new owner, to Southeast Asia.

After arrival, I met the other pilot, similarly contracted, and the Operations Manager. The first flight was to be the next day. We were assured that the aircraft was in good condition, ready to go and that it had recently had an "E check" and had been through a UK CAA flight test.

When we entered the aircraft, we could not find any documents or the Tech Log. Moreover, we checked the Navigation database and discovered that it did not contain the Asia region. Additionally, there were no paper charts, plates or information sheets and the luggage area contained approximately 500lbs of boxes/cargo.

We mentioned the charts and were told "we could use photocopies". When we mentioned the database, we were told that it would be waiting there for us at our first refuelling stop. We were told that the documents were in the aircraft but on returning to the aircraft we initiated a thorough search and still didn't find them; again we were told they were there.

Having discovered the cargo, we then calculated that we would be over the Max Take-off Mass for the planned mission. We both refused to fly the aircraft without everything being correct and in place.

We were seen as being obstructive and uncooperative, despite offering advice, possible solutions etc. Every trick in the book was played out, including tears in the eyes from the Ops Manager, to get us to fly illegally.

The following day, a set of photocopied Jeppesen plates appeared and an en-route chart containing every part of the original chart, except the issue/expiry date.

An admission was extracted about the missing aircraft documents and the Ops Manager travelled by car to the previous owner to collect them; we later received a plastic bag containing some documents.

When we asked where the RVSM certificate and weighing certificate were, we were told that they were on the Ops Manager's laptop. This became the standard response when things were missing!

Two days later we still had no RVSM certificate, weighing certificate and we couldn't find the Tech Log. The Ops Manager then informed us the Tech Log was with the engineer.

He began to question our performance calculations and quoted some incorrect specifications. We duly pointed out that he was referring to a later model, this model having a lower Max Take-off Mass etc. In addition, he then began to re-adjust the fuel uplift, basing the fuel burn on 1,000lbs/hr, which was approximately half the actual, or one engine's, consumption.

All the time, we were being constantly pushed, bullied and harangued, by the Ops Manager into flying this overweight aircraft to the planned destination.

Finally, we agreed to fly, without the owner, collect the database, purchase the required en route charts and plates and continue. However, we ran out of time that day because the Ops Manager's credit card could not pay the handling agent's bill and they would not give us any fuel until payment could be assured.

Our departure was delayed the following day due to the Ops Manager being unable to pay the hotel bill.

The handling agent still refused us any fuel until he had been paid up-front for it and by the time we were ready to taxi we were several hours late.

As the owner had travelled commercially, the plan was changed; we had a short flight, (to collect the data base, charts etc.), and one further fuel stop en route to the company base.

On flying the aircraft we discovered several technical problems including VHF/Intercom communications difficulties. After landing, we tried to visit the Jeppesen shop, but we were too late; it was already closed. So, we still had no en route charts for the next leg. The Asia navigation database did not appear, there was an obvious AP fault and we clearly needed new headsets. We refused to take the aircraft any further without these items.

The Ops Manager was not concerned about the AP even though the aircraft manufacturer had a service centre just feet away and they were still working.

He did purchase some headsets from them, and we did eventually find the weighing certificate. However, we still had no charts and plates and the RVSM certificate and Tech Log were not with us on the flight deck, despite numerous requests and protestations that we had to be legal.

At this stage we had been constantly fighting the Ops Manager for almost one week, to ensure the flights were legal.

After being subjected to this immense pressure, we were just tired of fighting and decided to take the aircraft to the revised destination. We had headsets, but still lacked our documents.

At our next refuel stop the engineer paid for the fuel with a wad of dollars and we continued.

On arrival at our destination we were met by the owner's representatives and ferried to a hotel. Less than one hour later we received a paper airline itinerary pushed under the door; this was actually out-of-date, but that evening we were informed by a hotel employee that we were to be picked up at 3am to go to the airport. Nobody from the company told us anything at all.

What makes all this worse is the fact that the Ops Manager is a UK national, who should have known better, as he allegedly had an ATPL and more than 11,000 hours, although I am beginning to doubt everything he said.

As crew members, we have to produce licences, certificates, passport etc. to a potential employer, yet the crew never get proof of the legitimacy of the Accountable Manager(s) or a copy of the AOC etc. In this case we could not even make contact with the Ops Manager before we left home.

Moreover, the company's website is offering the aircraft for hire, but there is no AOC.

Both crew members are now fighting for the remuneration due to them under the contract.

It's a shame that the crew suffer in these situations, simply because they wish to conduct flights in a safe, professional and legal manner. However, as I have experienced, doing so will not always pay your mortgage and put food on your table.

(2)

Report Text: After more than 20 years flying experience, mainly on airline scheduled/charter operations during which time I had flown 10.000 hours uneventfully, I was made redundant and have since been undertaking occasional free lance work.

I agreed to fly for a non-UK EU corporate operator for several days recently. The aircraft was parked at a UK regional airport, having suffered a series of brake failures, resulting in several blown out tyres. On first inspection, all the company Operations Manuals were missing, as well as the entire Jeppesen kit. The FMS database was also out of date. I had the handling agent help me to print out all necessary charts to execute the planned flights and relied on the operations manuals for the same aircraft type that were stored in my laptop, although they had been issued by another operator. On one of the subsequent flights, the brake system problem recurred, resulting in another tyre blow-out with passengers on board.

Of course I have been flying this aircraft beyond its legal minimum equipment status, to earn a buck and save the company the embarrassment and possible legal consequences from customers should I refuse to fly the aircraft. I could have easily refused on several legal grounds; however, had I done so, I would not have earned anything, which was essential for my family.

Surely this is the rock bottom of what is taking place under the guise of a JAR-OPS1 approved flight operation. I was getting used to some doubtful practices but never to this extent. It is a REAL, profound mess with the only aim being to undercut serious operators' pricing quotes for similar flights and gain an unfair commercial advantage over them.

Lessons Learned:

1. To pilots flying for these dubious companies: Stop flying and get another job.
2. To National Authorities: Dig really deep into these companies; not just a SAFA ramp check. Virtually none of them conducts Licence Proficiency Checks (LPC) or Operations Proficiency Checks (OPC) in a simulator. Most pilots don't do a company conversion course and an OPC, let alone Crew Resource Management (CRM), Fire Fighting and Rescue and all other required company courses. No pilot sticks to Operations Manual 'A' or 'B' procedures. CRM is virtually absent everywhere.

CHIRP Comment: The experiences of these two reporters highlight the importance of gaining as much information as might be available on an operator prior to accepting a contract either directly or through a

third-party agency. Remember, it is your licence that will be at risk.

Also, regrettably, it is often the case that employment laws in the countries in which the aircraft and/or operator is registered afford individuals with little if any legal protection in situations such as those described.

Thus, in the case of employment secured through a recruitment agency the only option might be for an individual to bring legal action against the agency; however, in the words of one of the reporters:

"This would be the career equivalent of taking a suicide pill, because there is no way you would ever get a job through that agency again. Also aviation is a small world and, as sure as eggs are eggs, many other recruiting agencies would soon learn of any litigation undertaken. The result: Recruitment Agencies 1, Pilots 0; a situation that is becoming all too familiar in this industry!"

It is worth noting that the British Business and General Aviation Association (BBGA) has sought to raise safety standards among non-UK corporate operators through the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) and the IS-BAO code of practice. Also, in cases where an aircraft is operated into/out of either the UK or any EU Member State, there are provisions for safety inspections to be conducted. The point of contact in the UK is the Department for Transport (Aviation Sector).

The reporters' concerns have been represented to the relevant authorities.

WINTER OPERATIONS - A REMINDER

Each winter we receive reports of aircraft taking off with substantial amounts of contamination present on wings, flying surfaces and/or fuselage. The following were received last winter:

(1)

Report Text: I am a Captain with ### based at a UK regional airport. I was at work this morning and like all my company colleagues waited in turn to get de-iced before I took my passengers to the Mediterranean. I was amazed to see a ### twin jet taxi in front of me to the take off runway with nearly 2 inches of snow covering the whole fuselage.

I was also told by the handling agent that previously another twin jet and a twin turboprop had taxied and got airborne with a similar amount of snow on their aircraft. What I find unfortunate that there is no legislation for an airport authority to stop aircraft like that to get airborne even though the effect of an accident like that would have an impact on us all and all those who live along the flight path.

Lessons Learned: Airlines should stop such practices, but some obviously will not without the relevant Authorities imposing such measures.

(2)

Report Text: I would not normally file a report about another operator but after witnessing this event I felt that it would be irresponsible not to do so.

I was the operating Captain on a flight from AAA (Eastern Europe) to BBB (UK). At AAA aircraft requiring

de-icing are allocated positions away from the terminal building and must complete this task before engine start. We had pushed back to one of the de-icing spots.

Whilst we were being de-iced at least another 6 aircraft had pushed back at around the same time for de-icing. The prevailing weather conditions were almost continuous light to moderate snow. These conditions had existed since we had landed over an hour and a half earlier.

Before our de-icing was complete we noticed an ##### (Non-UK EC airline) twin jet push back. The aircraft did not push to a de-icing spot but soon disconnected the tug and started the engines without any de-icing. The aircraft was given taxi clearance and as it turned tail on to us I noticed significant snow deposits on its trailing edge flaps. I called the tower and informed them of what I had observed and identified the aircraft.

Almost immediately I got a response directly from the ##### aircraft something to the effect that they had just switched on their de-icing and that I had probably seen the smoke (I presume instead of the snow that I had actually seen). The message did not make sense and seemed as if it was for the benefit of the ground controller to imply that everything was alright. I responded again on the ground frequency making a very clear unambiguous statement that I had observed snow contamination on the trailing edge flaps of the ##### aircraft. This time there was silence from both the aircraft flight crew and the ground controller (who was also busy with other traffic). The ##### aircraft continued to the holding point and took off sometime later.

The main reason for this report is that I have never seen an aircraft taxi without de-icing in such snow conditions. If the conditions were borderline I could understand, although not necessarily agree with it but these conditions could never be described as such. All the other departing aircraft were de-icing.

My second reason for writing is because the flight crew of the ##### aircraft, having already omitted to protect their aircraft, then chose to ignore (twice) a report of actual contamination of critical aerodynamic surfaces. If the flaps were contaminated in such a way I had wondered what the wing was like.

CHIRP Comment: There appears to be an assumption among a small but significant number of pilots that, irrespective of the aircraft manufacturer's advice, modern aircraft types can tolerate a degree of contamination or that this will be removed during the take-off run. Regrettably, a number of fatal accidents have shown both assumptions to be fallacious.

Indeed, some modern wing designs can, in some circumstances, be more critically affected by relatively small amounts of contamination [For those not convinced; read AAIB Report 5/2004].

Also, whilst it may be widely recognised that contamination on the fuselage presents a potential risk in the case of tail-mounted engine designs, reports show that some pilots do not consider the weight penalty of several inches of snow on the fuselage. Cabin air-conditioning will often result in dry powdery

snow becoming wet during boarding/taxi and remaining attached during take off. Next time you clear your drive of wet snow, consider the weight of a full shovel and then consider the effect of the additional weight of a snow covered fuselage on your calculated V_R / V_2 speeds or your performance in the event of an engine failure.

Don't be pressured into assuming that it will be alright because the accident records show that it won't always be so.

ROSTERS AND LEAVE ENTITLEMENT

Report Text: I am writing with regard to the recent treatment of new First Officers in this company, which has employed some individuals who are required to spend several months 'on probation' before being offered an employment contract by a third-party organisation on behalf of the company; others are recruited directly by the third-party organisation. The reason for stating these differences will become evident.

I was operating recently with an individual who had just been recruited after a period of probation. During the eight month probationary period, the FO and others in a similar position had not been allowed to take any leave and had also been advised that they would not be able to take any leave whilst working as company pilots during the summer period. This will add up to at least 12 months without leave. The argument is that for the probationary period they are the responsibility of the third party organisation, whilst after this they are the responsibility of a separate division of the same organisation that administers the scheme on behalf of the company. Meanwhile, my company management absolve themselves of all responsibility.

Further to this, the company have recently asked Captains at several bases to accept the same roster pattern as used for the new First Officers to help out with the flying programme. It is well known that this pattern is incredibly tiring in the environment in which we work. Most pilots can only work this pattern for three months before feeling exhausted.

These new co-pilots are working this pattern continually without the prospect of any respite through leave. This is placing pressures on individuals' home-life as well as further increasing the stresses and fatigue of new pilots. Whilst the company buries its head in the sand behind statements such as "we are managing the issue." These pilots will not say they are fatigued as they feel it will stand against them when they apply for a permanent position.

Couple the above with the fact that Captains are flying more frequently with vastly less experienced pilots, I feel that safety standards are being eroded and the "Swiss Cheese" holes are lining up.

CHIRP Comment: This was one of several reports received on this topic and reviewed by the CHIRP Air Transport Advisory Board.

The Board acknowledged that many junior First Officers are extremely keen to build their hours/experience as quickly as possible, especially in cases where remuneration levels or contracted employment is dependent on these factors. The Board concluded that

these factors and the method of recruitment described, involving a period of probation, could have an effect on the reporting of fatigue/tiredness. On the Board's advice, the matter was discussed with the operator and referred to the CAA for review.

In their subsequent response the CAA noted that the Flight Operations Inspector (FOI) designated to oversee the operator's operations had not seen any evidence that new First Officers were recording higher fatigue events than other pilot groups. All pilots, whether directly employed by the company or indirectly employed, were encouraged to submit fatigue reports when appropriate. As part of the pilot training programme, individuals received guidance on how to recognise fatigue and how to help prevent it. The 'just culture' within the company was assessed by the CAA to be strong,

The operator acknowledged that due to extensive recruitment in recent years, pilots' experience levels have reduced; however, robust safeguards/restrictions have been implemented to ensure that this is managed appropriately. Furthermore Flight Data Monitoring data has shown no adverse trends with regard to experience levels.

With regard to the leave allocation for new First Officers, the company has recently discussed this with the agency employing these individuals. An agreement has now been reached that enables new First Officers to request a period of additional rest days during their line flying consolidation period. Following the consolidation period the company makes normal provision for annual leave within its rostering system.

CABIN CREW REPORTS

TURBULENCE AND 'SEAT BELTS'

Report Text: On this relatively short flight the weather was turbulent.

The Captain switched the 'seat belt' signs off after we levelled off. We commenced service and the turbulence increased, a crew member at the rear requested the seat belt signs to be put on; however, the Captain refused. The senior cabin crew member (SCCM) spoke to the Captain who maintained it would improve and that "it was his/her decision". It was very difficult to complete the service.

On the return leg the turbulence increased. Eventually the Captain switched on the 'seat belt' sign and the SCCM made an announcement to suspend cabin service. Shortly afterwards the turbulence worsened; this was described by the flight crew as 'Moderate'.

My concern is that the Captain did not take any notice of my concerns or the crew member at the rear - both of us with a combined experience of over 40 years!

Luckily, no-one was hurt. This has never happened to me before; but it does concern me.

CHIRP Comment: EU-OPS 1.1000 (b) states:

The senior cabin crew member shall have responsibility to the commander for the conduct and coordination of normal and emergency procedure(s) specified in the Operations Manual. During turbulence, in the absence of

any instructions from the flight crew, the senior cabin crew member shall be entitled to discontinue non-safety related duties and advise the flight crew of the level of turbulence being experienced and the need for the fasten seat belt signs to be switched on.

In this instance, as the SCCM's report to the Captain was unfortunately ignored, if the SCCM considered the level of turbulence in the passenger cabin to be such that continuing the service presented a safety risk to passengers and/or cabin crewmembers, the SCCM should have discontinued the service until he/she assessed it to be safe to continue.

Deputy Director (Engineering) - Part-time

THE ROLE:

The principal responsibilities of the Deputy Director (Engineering) are the analysis, co-ordination and administration of maintenance/engineering related confidential incident reports and assisting with the day-to-day management of the UK Maintenance Error Management System (MEMS) database. The post-holder will be based at Farnborough, Hampshire.

THE DESIRED PROFILE:

- An established reputation in a senior engineering appointment within the UK air transport industry.
- A wide professional experience of UK airline maintenance / engineering procedures and standards.
- A good knowledge of the organisation and regulation of UK aircraft maintenance and engineering.
- Good interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate effectively at all levels up to senior executive.
- Excellent writing skills in English.
- Computer literate with ability to prepare and deliver high quality presentations.

A REMUNERATION PACKAGE REFLECTING THE SENIORITY OF THIS APPOINTMENT IS AVAILABLE

APPLICANTS SHOULD APPLY IN WRITING WITH A CURRENT CV TO: THE CHIRP CHARITABLE TRUST, 26 HERCULES WAY, FARNBOROUGH, HANTS GU14 6UU

THE CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS 6 JANUARY 2012

If you wish to contact the CAA Flight Operations Inspectorate or to report any safety matter which is outside the scope of the MOR Scheme please e-mail the CAA at: flightoperationssafety@caa.co.uk

Have you Moved House?

If you receive FEEDBACK as a licensed pilot/ATCO/maintenance engineer please notify Personnel Licensing at the CAA of your change of address and **not** CHIRP. Please complete a change of address form which is available to download from the CAA website and fax/post to the CAA at Gatwick:

The Change of address form is available from: www.caa.co.uk/docs/175/srg_fcl_changeofaddress.pdf

Alternatively, you can e-mail your change of address to the department that issues your licence (please remember to include your licence number!)