

# **CHIRP**

## **Air Transport FEEDBACK**

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### **EDITORIAL**

Encouragement to submit reports is a common theme in FEEDBACK. So it is good news, notwithstanding the teething troubles encountered, that another operator has sought to make reporting as easy as possible – see the report on Flight Safety Reporting in this edition. Fatigue reporting will inevitably be more complicated than the reporting of technical issues because of the range of potential contributory factors from the days (and possibly weeks) before that need to be taken into account to determine the cause. So any facility to enable safety reports of all kinds to be submitted from wherever, whenever and by whatever means is to be welcomed and encouraged.

The introduction and promotion of a Just Culture across the industry is a welcome development and the option to submit Mandatory Occurrence Reports confidentially provides an option for reporters concerned about potential adverse consequences. Nevertheless, it is recognised that some environments such as small ATCUs can make willingness to report difficult. Reporting occurrences involving readily identifiable colleagues or roles requires moral courage when future working relationships are potentially at risk. But it doesn't have to be that way. The best way is for the seniors and supervisors to lead by example and report everything, particularly issues that might not otherwise come to light and – moral courage and professionalism again – those which might not show the reporter in the best light. Only by doing this can we be sure that our Safety Management Systems have the data they require to be effective and that Accountable Managers have the facts and evidence they require when briefing accountants and Chief Executives about safety issues and changes needed.

An environment in which there is thought to be great room for improvement in the reporting culture is that of ground handling staff. Approximately 8% of all safety occurrences reported to the CAA in the past five years involved ground handling. The most numerous reports fall in to six event types: Ground Damage, Loading Error, De-Icing, Fuelling, Marshalling and Catering. This is an environment which is usually heavily contractorised, sometimes with a hire and fire culture that may not be conducive to proactive reporting through open channels. Therefore CHIRP is engaged in an initiative to introduce CHIRP confidential reporting to ground handling personnel. A trial programme began at 2 UK airports in May with a view to rolling out the programme across the UK later in the year. The first edition of Ground Handling FEEDBACK

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has been produced and is available on the web, App and in hardcopy in ground handling staff crew rooms. We would be grateful for any assistance readers can offer in taking forward this new programme. Encouragement to ground handling staff to submit reports and the submission of reports that would be of interest to ground handlers would all be of enormous help.

Ian Dugmore - Chief Executive

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### ENGINEERING EDITORIAL

A number of recent reports received have covered the use of non-prescribed medicine obtained from the internet, and of recreational drug use. Whilst the use of recreational drugs may be legal dependent on the class of the drug, it can have the same effect as taking non-prescribed medicine. The lack of medical supervision and self-treatment using non-prescribed medication and/or taking recreational drugs is never a good idea and can be potentially harmful.

Buying recreational drugs, or medication via the internet, can be dangerous – there are no guarantees that what it says on the packet is what is in the packet. The danger ranges from completely innocuous substances being substituted for the drugs/medication that the packet purports to contain, to potentially harmful substances being substituted. You simply do not know what you are taking or its interaction with other medicines.

All drugs/medications have potential side-effects that could be relevant for occupational purposes; for example - drowsiness. This is especially true when doses are not being controlled/monitored. Without medical supervision this could be particularly serious.

If taking recreational drugs, or self-treating with non-prescribed medicine bought over the counter or on the internet, then you should seek medical advice and help, either from your doctor or through your company's occupational health facility.

Dave Tattersall – Deputy Director (Engineering)

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### FLIGHT SAFETY REPORTING

**Report Text:** The Company has introduced a new safety reporting procedure which uses either an App on issued tablets or an online website. The App rarely works and when it does it is complicated and difficult to complete. You need to be online to use the web link. Previously we could write reports on our laptop and email them as an attachment. Simple and effective. These forms have gone now as they want you to use the new system.

I am concerned that the App and web link are so difficult to use that pilots will not be safety/fatigue reporting when they normally would as the process is so difficult.

Also the company do not acknowledge reports that you have sent so it is difficult to see if your report has been received and ignored or lost in cyber space.

Good idea but poor execution and poor maintenance of the App and the safety reporting system.

**CHIRP Comment:** As noted in the editorial, CHIRP welcomes any and all improvements in safety reporting systems. It is disappointing when new systems do not perform as expected, causing frustration for users and operators alike and potentially creating a lack of confidence that may remain after early problems have been resolved. This operator has commented that introduction of the electronic reporting module and the App was not as smooth as hoped despite extensive testing during which line pilots commented favourably on the ease of use and there was no loss of data. Minor issues identified during the introduction have all been overcome with users working with the IT Helpdesk. In common with others, the operator has noted an increase in reporting rates, in this case to around 8-10%. The retention of existing reporting methods is promulgated via company safety promotion magazines and instructions on the company intranet. There are still problems associated with responding to electronic reports and app submissions; however, crew members are able to see the progress of their submissions via the intranet. The operator is working to overcome the remaining technical issues and notes that all reports submitted by other means are still acknowledged via manual processes.

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### NON-PRESCRIBED MEDICATION

**Report Text:** I am an aircraft mechanic and have been employed by [company name], based at [location] and mainly work in the hangar on nightshift carrying out phase checks.

After a period of sickness with work-related stress I returned to work at [company] and during my subsequent return to work conversations and correspondence it became apparent that my certifying Line Manager was taking the same medicine/drugs that were prescribed to me, however he was obtaining his off the internet without medical supervision. I am concerned on the effect these internet supplied drugs might be having on his ability to safely perform his duties and am unsure on the regulations on certifying staff taking un-prescribed medicine.

**CHIRP Comment:** The main concern is the lack of medical supervision from the use of non-prescribed medication. Self-treatment is never a good idea and can be potentially harmful. It is also essential to get the diagnosis correct in the first place before starting to treat any medical condition.

It is very important that contact should be made with a GP and/or the company's occupational health facility to seek proper medical supervision. It is also recommended that the company policy on 'alcohol and drugs' is referred to, which should provide advice and guidance on the support facilities available as well as the company policy on drug/alcohol use.

From the regulatory perspective the following are extracts that cover the subject matter:

*Part 66.B.500(7):* The competent authority shall suspend, limit or revoke the aircraft maintenance licence where it has identified a safety issue or if it has clear evidence that the person has carried out or been involved in one or more of the following activities:

7. carrying out maintenance or issuing a certificate of release to service when adversely affected by alcohol or drugs;

*CAP 562 Leaflet H-50 Implementation of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 – Aviation: Alcohol and Drugs*

The information contained in this Leaflet has been developed in conjunction with the Department for Transport, the Home Office and the Police, and is consistent with the criteria contained in the Police Protocol. It is anticipated that this will facilitate a consistent approach by relevant parties.

*CAP 562 Leaflet H-60 Licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineers – Personal Responsibility When Medically Unfit or Under the Influence of Drink or Drugs*

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has introduced an amendment to Annex 1 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation which has the effect of extending certain standards and recommended practices to all licence holders. The changes resulting from the amendment are concerned with medical fitness and the use or misuse of intoxicating liquor, narcotics or drugs.

#### *Para 3.7 Medication*

Any form of medication, whether prescribed by a doctor or purchased over the counter and particularly if being taken for the first time, may have serious consequences in the aviation maintenance environment unless three basic questions can be answered satisfactorily:

- a. Must I take medicines at all?
- b. Have I given this particular medication a personal trial for at least 24 hours before going on duty, to ensure that it will not have adverse effects on my ability to work and make sound decisions?
- c. Do I really feel fit for work?

Confirming the absence of adverse effects may need expert advice and General Practitioners, Company Medical Officers, Aero Medical Examiners and the Medical Division of the Civil Aviation Authority are all available to assist in this matter. Common types of medication in use and their effects are further described in CAP 562 Leaflet H-60 Appendix 1:

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The following are some of the types of medicine in common use which may impair work performance. This list is not exhaustive and care should be taken in ensuring the likely effects of any prescribed drug are adequately known before taking it.

a) Sleeping Tablets – These dull the senses, cause mental confusion and slow reaction times. The duration of effect is variable from person to person and may be unduly prolonged. Individuals should have expert medical advice before using them;

b) Anti-depressants – These can depress the alerting system and have been a contributory cause of mistakes leading to fatal accidents. A person should stop work when starting anti-depressants and only return when it is clear that there are no untoward side-effects. It is recommended that individuals seek medical advice from their General Practitioner or appropriate medical specialist before returning to work;

c) Antibiotics – These may have short-term or delayed effects which affect work performance. It is recommended that individuals seek medical advice from their General Practitioner or appropriate medical specialist before returning to work whilst taking antibiotics;

d) Anti-histamine – Such drugs are widely used in cold cures and in the treatment of hay fever, asthma and allergic skin conditions. Many easily obtainable nasal spray and drop preparations contain anti-histamines. Most of this group of medicines tend to make the taker feel drowsy. Their effect, combined with that of the condition, will often prevent the basic three questions (paragraph 3.7 of the Leaflet) from being answered satisfactorily. Admittedly very mild states of hay fever etc., may be adequately controlled by small doses of anti-allergic drugs, but a trial period to establish the absence of side effects is essential before going on duty. When individuals are affected by allergic conditions which require more than the absolute minimum of treatment and in all cases of asthma, one of the above mentioned sources of advice should be consulted;

e) 'Pep' pills (e.g. containing Caffeine or Amphetamine-like substances) used to maintain wakefulness are often habit forming. Susceptibility to each drug varies from one individual to another, but all of them can create dangerous over-confidence. Over-dosage may cause headaches, dizziness and mental disturbances. The use of 'pep' pills whilst working cannot be permitted. If coffee is insufficient, you are not fit for work;

f) Drugs for the relief of high blood pressure are proving to be very effective in controlling this condition. The prescribing practitioner should be able to advise on any side effects to be considered;

g) Drugs when prescribed for Anti-malaria in normally recommended doses do not usually have any adverse effects. However, the drug should be taken in good time so that the question in paragraph 3.7 b) of the Leaflet can be answered;

### NOTE:

Although the above are common groups of drugs, which may have adverse effects on performance, it should be pointed out that many forms of medication, which although not usually expected to affect efficiency may do so if the person concerned is unduly sensitive to a particular drug. Therefore no drugs, medicines, or combinations, should be taken before or during duty unless the taker is completely familiar with the effects on him or her of the medication and the drugs or medicines have specifically been prescribed for the individual alone. Again the sources of advice mentioned earlier in this Leaflet should be consulted in cases of doubt.

Cases of subtle physical or mental illness may not always be apparent to the individual but as engineers often work as a member of a team any sub-standard performance or unusual behaviour should be quickly noticed by colleagues or supervisors who should notify management so that appropriate support and counselling action can be taken.

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### WHEN ARE ADMIN AND TRAINING NOT A DUTY?

**Report Text:** This report is to seek clarity on the requirements of roster duties in order to undertake administrative & training functions on behalf of the operator.

As professional crew we keep ourselves abreast of the ever changing manuals and procedures as they are released by the company, we do this in our own time. It is accepted that this is reasonable under the

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grounds of professionalism. Crew may optionally also bid for leave and roster preferences in their own time also. This is a lifestyle choice and not mandatory.

The following extracts from EASA FTLs are reflected in our operations manual.

ORO FTL 105 Definitions:

“duty” means any task that a crew member performs for the operator, including flight duty, administrative work, giving or receiving training and checking, positioning, and some elements of standby;

And under ORO.FTL.245 Records of Home Base, Flight Times, Duty and Rest Periods:

(a) ‘insert airline name’ shall maintain, for a period of 24 months:

(1) individual records for each crew member including:

- (i) flight times;
- (ii) start, duration and end of each duty period and FDP;
- (iii) rest periods and days free of all duties; and
- (iv) assigned home base;

Recently the operator issued a notice to all employees (including pilots and cabin crew) that we must all complete online mandatory training, yet crew have not been rostered this as a 'duty'. From the above EASA definition within our FTL scheme it clearly states that `duty` includes administrative work & giving or receiving training.

The view taken by the operator is that this extra mandatory training simply falls into the realms of professionalism and crew can do it when they are on rest periods overseas (long haul) or when on standby or blank days on the roster.

Please could you advise if mandatory online training directed by the operator should be recorded as 'duty' as such to comply with our company FTL scheme – it would seem the EASA definition supports that it should be. If it is not to be recorded as an official “duty” can you please seek clarity on what other aspects of our FTL scheme are discretionary as I understood that the FTL scheme is a legal requirement and to deviate outside it jeopardises the licence holder.

**Company Response:** *This issue has been raised by the Director Flight Operations with the CAA and other UK operators to resolve. Whilst no definitive answer can be provided, the Company is working toward capturing the requirement within a pilot’s overall duty hours allowance. We continue to work with the wider industry to reach a satisfactory resolution.*

**CHIRP Comment:** Activities such as pre-simulator study or keeping up with ops manual changes are routine professional activities but not formal duties. However, activities that were previously completed in the classroom but are now carried out remotely using a computer should be considered as duties; the reported computer course falls into the latter category.

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### OFFICE STAFF COMPLETING DOWNROUTE AOG RECOVERIES

**Report Text:** I am very concerned that my company ([company name]) is allowing engineers in MOC (Maintenance control) to perform AOG aircraft recoveries. These are office workers and like the rest of the office engineers they should have their approvals quarantined. Downroute events have involved a team of office staff performing an engine change and this being certified by an MOC engineer.

**CHIRP Comment:** The CAA requires that Licensed Engineers hold the appropriate Type Approvals and Company Authorisations, if they are certifying for the work carried out. They must have had six months technical exposure to the aircraft type within the last two years to maintain authorisation. Technical exposure to the aircraft type can include working in Maintenance Control and their normal duties include technical involvement to the aircraft, such as dealing with technical issues, issuing ARCs and analysing service bulletins etc.

There are some other Human Factors that need to be taken into account, whenever an individual is assigned to work within the scope of their approval/authorisation, including the individual’s own capability whilst considering their previous working hours/shift pattern etc. and ensuring they are within the limitations of the EU Working Time Directive.

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The following extracts from EASA aviation rules cover the subject:

*Part 145.A30 (e) Competency of Staff*

The organisation shall establish and control the competence of personnel involved in any maintenance, development of maintenance programmes, airworthiness reviews, management and/or quality audits in accordance with a procedure and to a standard agreed by the competent authority.

*Part 145.A.35(c) Recency*

The organisation shall ensure that all certifying staff and support staff are involved in at least 6 months of actual relevant aircraft or component maintenance experience in any consecutive 2-year period.

*AMC 145.A.35(c)*

For the interpretation of “6 months of actual relevant aircraft maintenance experience in any consecutive 2-year period”, the provisions of AMC 66.A.20 (b)2 are applicable.

In summary there is no reason a Licensed Engineer, normally working in Maintenance Control, cannot work on aircraft and certify that work on either AOG recoveries, or on planned maintenance inputs, as long as they have the appropriate company authorisation.

In summary there is no reason why a Licensed Engineer, normally working in Maintenance Control, cannot work on aircraft and certify that work providing the requirements for continued recency and competence have been met. This includes work on AOG recoveries or on planned maintenance inputs. Company procedures will normally provide guidance on the continued validity of company authorisations or when suspension or passivation of an authorisation may be required.

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### AIRCRAFT DOCUMENTATION

**Report Text:** The MRO I work for is thinking of putting the paperwork for two aircraft in the same office. I wonder if that's legal when the aircraft are on a large check. Having guys working both bays could cause confusion with the paperwork when fatigued; also, when working from bay to bay there could be mistakes with the aircraft when working under pressure.

**CHIRP Comment:** Holding in one office aircraft paperwork for more than one aircraft in work, undergoing a hangar/heavy maintenance check, is something that happens in a number of approved EASA Part 145 MROs. Whilst it is not in breach of any regulations, it is not considered best practice. However, if the necessary procedures and controls are in place that prevent ‘cross-contamination’ of paperwork and satisfy the MRO’s Quality/Compliance department and the UK CAA, then it would be considered acceptable. The key is to ensure that the facilities are appropriate to the task. The EASA facility requirement regulations state:

*Part 145.A.25 (b):* Office accommodation is provided for the management of the planned work referred to in point (a), and certifying staff so that they can carry out their designated tasks in a manner that contributes to good aircraft maintenance standards.

*AMC 145.A.25 (a):* It is acceptable to combine any or all of the office accommodation requirements into one office subject to the staff having sufficient room to carry out the assigned tasks. In addition, as part of the office accommodation, aircraft maintenance staff should be provided with an area where they may study maintenance instructions and complete maintenance records in a proper manner.

The MRO Company had commented that it was seeking to implement a more on-line solution into its procedures and practices, eliminating paper based task cards and AMM printouts with individually issued laptop tablets and an application. It was not considering managing its job cards from one office.

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### COCKPIT DOOR PROCEDURES

**Report Text:** I have lately noticed a large number of colleagues fail to follow the company [cockpit door security] procedures properly.

On hearing a 'buzz' (entry request) from the cabin crew, it is (unofficial SOP that) the pilot monitoring assesses the request. Some individuals take what can only be described as a cursory glance at the [ ] screen & have 'clicked' the door open within a couple of seconds.

Crucially, they do not press the button which displays the other available views of the galley area - this is mandated by the operations manual & is there to guard against the possibility of would be wrongdoers hiding out of sight of the above door mounted camera, ready to enter the cockpit once the door is opened.

I am also concerned that the speed of the whole operation is often such that it seems impossible to me that real thought/care has been given to it.

One colleague clicked the door open recently without a single glance at the [cockpit door security] screen. Speechless....

Lessons Learned - Disappointingly it seems that [cockpit door security] now needs to be the subject of pre-flight briefing - as if we don't have enough to cover as it is!

As a community we need to remember that the 'baddies' are very much still out there & would dearly love to gain access to the cockpit of a commercial flight. This could ruin your day very quickly.

Can we all honestly say that we give cockpit door procedures the care they deserve?

**CHIRP Comment:** The report is a good reminder not to drop our guard progressively over time. Flight crew should follow procedures and debrief any lapses as and when they occur.

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### PUSHBACK WITH PASSENGERS STANDING

**Report Text:** This was an almost full flight. Most passengers had 2 pieces of hand luggage and early on during the boarding process it became evident that, as is often the case, we would struggle to accommodate all hand luggage. All available cabin crew were proactive in the cabin and assisted passengers to try and find space for their belongings. The ground staff asked to close the door almost immediately after the last passengers had boarded. At this stage there were still at least 20 people standing.

I was standing at the boarding door and approximately 30 seconds after the door closed, my colleague at the rear of the aircraft phoned to say that they had multiple pieces of hand luggage which they couldn't stow and lots of passengers still standing. It was impossible to reach the cabin manager as she was stuck in the cabin between passengers trying to stow bags. I proceeded immediately to the flight deck, with the flight deck door still open, and told the Captain the situation in the cabin, clearly stating that we had lots of passengers still standing and we were struggling to stow all hand luggage. They asked us to do our best and keep them posted. Approximately 90 seconds later I noticed the flight deck door was closed and felt the aircraft pushback. At this stage we still had around 10 passengers standing and 50% of the overhead lockers still open. We eventually managed to stow all bags in wardrobes as there was no alternative. I would estimate everyone was seated and bags stowed approximately 3-4 minutes after pushback commenced.

The cabin crew manager discussed the situation with the Captain after take-off and the obvious safety implications of pushing back with passengers still standing. The Captain claimed not to know that there was still anyone standing even though I physically went into the flight deck and told them just moments before pushback. I felt let down that the Captain had disregarded my information and chose to push back the aircraft and endanger the passengers and crew still standing.

Lessons Learned - If the cabin crew tell the flight crew that the cabin still has passengers standing, then do not move the aircraft! I appreciate the pressures of on time departures, however safety is and should always be our top priority.

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**CHIRP Comment:** CHIRP's view is that passengers should normally be seated for pushback. There is no EASA definition of taxiing, albeit the Oxford English Dictionary defines taxiing: 'of an aeroplane, etc., or its pilot: to travel slowly along the ground or water under the machine's own power'.

Under EASA, pushback and towing are addressed under:

### CAT.OP.MPA.205 Pushback and Towing – aeroplanes

Pushback and towing procedures specified by the operator shall be conducted in accordance with established aviation standards and practices.

Although not stated, it would be surprising if these standards and procedures were significantly different from those governing taxiing which require:

### CAT.OP.MPA.225 Seats, safety belts and restraint systems

#### (b) Passengers

(1) Before take-off and landing, and during taxiing, and whenever deemed necessary in the interest of safety, the commander shall be satisfied that each passenger on board occupies a seat or berth with his/her safety belt or restraint system properly secured.

Therefore it is for the Commander to decide whether it is necessary, in the interests of safety, for passengers to be seated prior to pushing back. As stated above, it is CHIRP's view that passengers should normally be seated for pushback.

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## POOR DOCUMENTATION AND ELECTRONIC CHARTS NOT AVAILABLE

**Report Text:** I was reporting for a two pilot operation to a destination in the Middle East. There had been an ongoing problem all day with our Electronic Charting. They essentially were unable to fix the problem but came up with a 'fix' which in my opinion was unacceptable. If I had been asked to overfly for example Russia/China I would have refused to operate. Essentially we were able to have our departure Airfield 'plates' and our destination airfield 'plates'. We were essentially flying 'blind' for anything enroute. So having to divert to a strange airfield en route potentially was a recipe for a disaster. The management's rather cavalier approach of 'use the FMC' was in my opinion nothing short of criminal. I am personally a fan of electronic charting and indeed the whole concept of using modern technology to improve our SA. However without suitable user friendly back-up systems in place I feel we are living on borrowed time before an incident occurs due entirely down to a lack of suitable charting. The other major flight safety issue was the distraction element. It was huge. I believe now the CAA has to start getting involved.

Lessons Learned - To stop the migration to electronic charting without a suitable backup plan which has been rigorously tested and all pilots are happy with, and is demonstrated to work.

**CHIRP Comment:** Electronic charting offers great advantages for convenience and safety – when it is working properly. The operator's contingency plan, accepted by the CAA, required pilots to circumvent the problem by using the internet; this allowed access to all of the chart database for downloading and/or printing as required. The advice in the contingency plan was to download a suitable number of charts for the route of flight. The operator would have been supportive of any pilot delaying a departure to download an appropriate number of charts.

The question remains: what is a suitable number of charts? And what about approach plates for a possible diversion? EASA regulations require the carriage of:

*Current and suitable aeronautical charts for the route of the proposed flight and all routes along which it is reasonable to expect that the flight may be diverted*

The ANO requires the carriage of:

*Maps, charts, codes and other documents and navigational equipment necessary, in addition to any other equipment required under this Order, for the intended flight of the aircraft including any diversion which may reasonably be expected.*

Perhaps it all hinges on the word 'reasonable'? Professional flight crew are more than capable of route planning and contingency planning. However, modern airline operations take much of this out of the hands of the flight crew; selecting and preparing contingency options along a prepared route are not part of the daily routine or factored into pre-flight time allowances. Given the potential number of diversions to review

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for a long haul route and uncertainty about which of these might already be loaded in the aircraft FMS, it seems reasonable that the operator's contingency plans should include guidance about en route diversion options. Without such guidance it is not surprising that pilots felt uneasy about the resulting additional responsibilities and pressures associated with their role in managing this system failure.

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### Pilots wanted for Air Traffic Controller Training

(Advert carried for NATS)

NATS is looking for additional volunteer pilots to participate in ART (ATCO Refresher Training) with Swanwick Air Traffic Controllers (ATCOs).

ATCOs complete ABES (Abnormal and Emergency Situations) training as a mandatory requirement to maintain their licence. Participating pilots have the opportunity to gain a better understanding of what NATS does should there be a PAN or MAYDAY call. The input from pilots allows ATCOs to hear first-hand how emergencies are dealt with.

Pilots also have the opportunity to spend time in the simulators and visit both Operation Rooms for Area Control and Terminal Control.

Training is done through facilitated classroom discussion and simulator exercises at the Swanwick Control Centre, and Corporate and Technical Centre, in Hampshire.

ABES is an afternoon course running from 1300 to 2000 throughout the year (with fewer courses during the summer months).

Scenario Training for Aircrew and Controllers (STAC) is a day course running from 0900 to 1530 several times a month between Sept and April.

Travel expenses are paid to volunteer pilots for distances up to 260 miles and refreshments are provided on day.

Email [TRUCE@nats.co.uk](mailto:TRUCE@nats.co.uk) for more information

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