

# CHIRP FEEDBACK

Issue No: 73

Winter 2004/05

## EDITORIAL

In this first issue for 2005 the format of AIR TRANSPORT FEEDBACK has been revised in response to your comments from the Survey, conducted last year. In addition to the layout and font changes, where relevant, we have included more detail as to what action we took with each report. We have also added some trend information in response to requests. If you have any comments on the content/layout please let us know.

It has come to my notice that some individuals may be reluctant to submit reports on the basis that the item might be published and thus lead to their identification. It is important to understand that we always seek the reporter's consent in any action that we take with a report, including publishing in FEEDBACK.

### Number of Reports Received Since the Last Issue:

Flight Crew - 39

#### Report Topics Have Included:

Flight Time Limitations - Roster Instability  
Excessive Payload  
Aircraft Serviceability - Non-UK Operator  
Airport Security Procedures  
Ramp Safety  
Noise Preferential Routings

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ATC - 5

#### Report Topics Have Included:

Blocked ATC Frequency  
Low Visibility Procedures  
Procedural Separation  
Team Resource Management Training

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Engineer - 11

#### Report Topics Have Included:

Engineer IDs  
Repair Approval Process  
Unauthorised Interference with a/c Ready for Flight  
Ground Equipment Design Inadequacy  
EASA Licensing Approvals

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### TCAS RAs - A CHANGE

We all operate in an environment where nearly every aircraft is equipped with TCAS and we accept it as a vital part of our safety defences. Effective from January 31, the Manual of Air Traffic Services clarifies responsibilities following a TCAS RA in order to align more closely with ICAO. Pilots are required to report TCAS RAs to ATC as soon as practicable. Once ATC is advised that an aircraft is responding to an RA, controllers must no longer issue avoiding action instructions. They will limit their response to 'Roger' and may offer traffic information. A corresponding amendment is being made to CAP717 "Radar Control - Collision Avoidance Concepts".

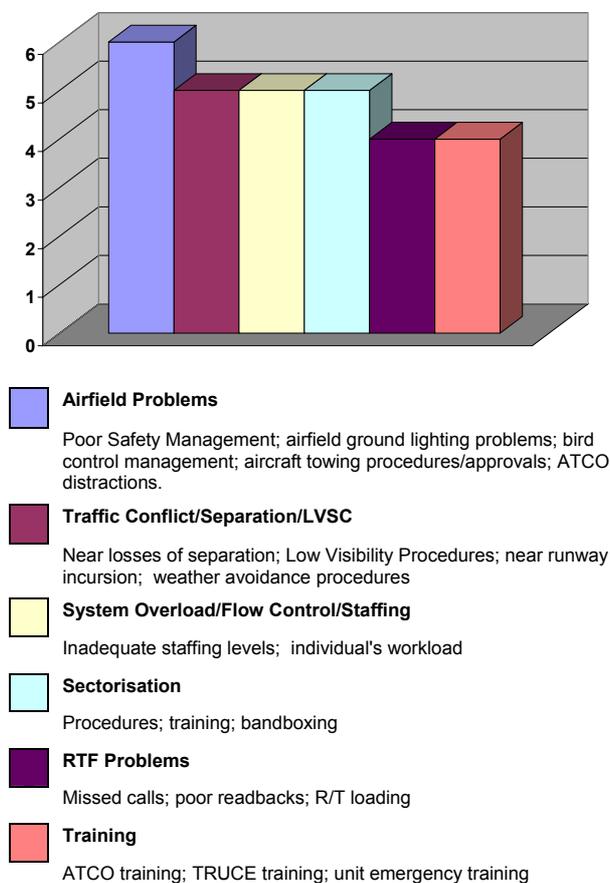
AIR TRANSPORT FEEDBACK is also available on the **CHIRP** website - [www.chirp.co.uk](http://www.chirp.co.uk)

An Air Transport Safety Newsletter

from **CHIRP** the Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme

# ATC REPORTS

## Most Frequent ATC Issues Received Jan 03 - Dec 04



## BLOCKED FREQUENCY

**Report Text:** I was controlling on the AAA and BBB sectors in a 'bandboxed' configuration (control of sectors combined) recently when it started to become apparent that departing aircraft were not being presented to me in the normal manner. Aircraft were levelling off for long periods of time at low altitudes and being left on headings which were taking them outside controlled airspace.

Eventually, my colleague received a telephone call from the ### coordinator, advising us that an outbound aircraft was having radio problems and was intermittently blocking the sector frequency, hence the unusual behaviour of the other outbound traffic. As this was creating considerable workload for us as well as ###, it was decided to split the sectors so that I was left with the BBB sector only.

Unfortunately, although splitting the sectors is normally helpful, all this coincided with a peak in traffic, and a particularly complicated traffic situation, which resulted in an outbound slow climbing four-engine jet, still under the control of ###, being left on

a track pointing straight at one of my aircraft inbound to the ### VOR beacon. Despite being told to expedite by the ### controller, the climbing four-engine jet was only able to manage around 1,000ft per minute in the climb. As the conflicting aircraft was still not on my frequency and my aircraft still closing on the conflicting aircraft, I turned mine right only to see the conflicting aircraft start to turn left! This resulted in a loss of separation and it was entirely fortuitous that the rates of turn of the two aircraft concerned meant that this did not turn into a much more serious incident.

Subsequent to this incident, we discovered that the pilot of the aircraft which had blocked the TC frequency had been requested to stop transmitting whilst a discrete frequency was brought into operation for him. The pilot had apparently ignored this request and thus started the chain of errors that led to the loss of separation.

Please can I ask crews who suspect, or are informed by ATC, that they have a problem with their radios to think about their subsequent actions and the effect a blocked frequency might have on ATC operations.

I appreciate that there was a chain of events that led to this incident (as is always the case), but it would probably never have happened if the pilot hadn't transmitted when requested not to do so.

**CHIRP Comment:** Several points emerge from this report.

First, in relation to the aircraft blocking the frequency, some R/T transmitter defects prevent the flight crew from receiving incoming RTF transmissions, thus they might not have been aware of the ATC instruction. Secondly, if the RTF problem occurred during a busy period for the flight crew, such as the initial departure, or was associated with a more serious technical problem, it is possible that an 'open' transmitter would not be immediately apparent to the flight crew. An additional point is that the all-engine climb performance of a heavy four-engine aircraft can be quite modest when compared to that of a large twin-engine aircraft.

From a flight crew perspective, if you suspect an 'open' RTF transmitter, be aware of the problems that a failure of this type can cause to ATC and other aircraft, particularly on busy frequencies.

## PROCEDURAL SEPARATION

**Report Text:** Radar had been out-of-service since mid afternoon the previous day. When only one aircraft was inbound we'd ask a neighbouring ATC unit to vector the inbounds to a point where they could intercept the ILS. However, when the evening 'rush' occurred the only sure way to ensure safe separation was to operate in accordance with Procedural Separation.

Levels for the hold and EAT's (*Estimated Approach Times*) were being issued. These were passed via the preceding controlling unit. With one aircraft on the approach and another aircraft holding I was asked by the adjacent unit whether ABC123 could self position for the ILS - I told them no, reiterated their level for the hold and their EAT. When this aircraft came onto the approach frequency he was reissued with the level and the EAT, which he accepted, but then started 'badgering' me as to whether he would have to hold or could go straight inbound - 10 minutes prior to his allocated EAT. Conditions were IFR with a traffic mix of arrivals and departures.

Going procedural doesn't happen very often, but when it does, it ensures safe separation and we try and expedite traffic as much as possible. I find this lack of professionalism from a UK crew worrying, as it shows a lack of understanding of the environment they may have to work in, together with a total disregard of the other traffic 'in the queue'.

We don't like working non-radar either, however, the separations and techniques used are there for their safety - so please accept it and don't block the frequency in what is already a busy environment.

**CHIRP Comment:** For crews used to operating routinely in a radar environment, it is important to understand that when required to operate under a Procedural Service the separation minima applied by ATC are significantly greater than those applicable when operating to Radar Separation standards. As an example, a radar separation minimum of 3 or 5nm is generally permitted between aircraft flying at the same level on the same track, whereas the corresponding procedural separation is normally 10 minutes flying time.

In the circumstances described in this report, a clearer understanding of the need for increased separation minima and their impact on arrival flow rates would have been helpful in understanding the constraints under which ATC was operating.

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## TRM TRAINING

**Report Text:** I am writing with reference to the situation that is occurring at this Unit regarding TRM (Team Resource Management) Training. This is a mandatory two-day residential course requiring attendance from 9am to 7pm on day 1 followed by 9am to 5pm on day 2.

The method by which this is being resourced is that all controllers are required to attend on two consecutive, rostered days off. Management contend that this is possible because under existing working practices, all controllers can be rostered up to a maximum of 3 extra days for training. Until now this has taken the form of TRUCE training on a single day off, which is protected by SCRATCOH (Scheme for

the regulation of the hours of the UK civil air traffic controllers). It was NEVER envisaged that the time would be used for attending a 2½ day (18 hours required) course.

These courses have just commenced. The required shift cycle, combined with the TRM training, means that controllers are only guaranteed one day off in 16. The controllers who were on the first TRM course have complained about tiredness & fatigue well before the end of their 16 days.

As TRM does not have to be SCRATCOH compliant, management state that it does not breach any rulings over hours. This may be the case but it neglects three important issues.

1. The course requires a large amount of mental input. Staff returning off the course state it is mentally tiring and one day off before a 0630 start does not sufficiently rest people prior to the start of the next shift cycle.
2. The rationale of SCRATCOH is that you should not work in excess of 2 hours and STILL be on a licensed position. This philosophy has never been questioned by management. TRM means that people are working shifts at the end of TRM on cycle 2 that they would be precluded from working were the course days operational.
3. Even if this is not a breach of SCRATCOH it is certainly NOT in the spirit of the law.

I am extremely concerned about the safety implications of a controller who has worked 15 days out of 16 (112 hours in 16 days) controlling a heavy flow of traffic in the morning of day 16.

**CHIRP Comment:** The report was forwarded to both NATS and CAA (SRG) for comment.

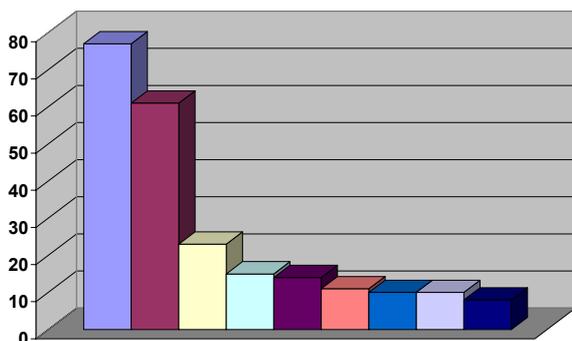
NATS advised that the introduction of TRM training was considered a high priority in light of various recent reports, most notably Ueberlingen. As the reporter notes, the controllers' working practice agreement includes three days on which management may roster staff over and above their normal shift pattern. The Management considered the safety benefits to be accrued from the training to be significant and in order to ensure all staff received training throughout the winter period 04/05 these extra days were considered the most appropriate vehicle; the two-day residential course was recommended by specialists as the best option. Feedback from staff who had completed the training had been generally positive; all comments including those of the reporter would be reviewed by management.

CAA (SRG) advised that they had been notified by NATS that the training arrangement had been agreed with staff representatives. CAA (SRG) had stated that NATS managers would have to acknowledge that the proposed sequence of duties might result in some individual cases of controller fatigue and that they must be prepared to monitor relevant staff for any

signs of reduced performance during the cycle following the training. SRG stated that the TRM training will be highly beneficial in the context of safety improvement in the UK ATM environment.

## FLIGHT CREW REPORTS

**Most Frequent Flight Crew Issues Received :  
Jan 03 - Dec 04**



- Fatigue/Duty Time/Rosters**  
 Multiple roster changes; inappropriate mix of early/late duties; continued use of company week leading to excessive 7-day flying hours; inappropriate use of FTL variations; use of self-drive/hire cars; split duties; reduced rest periods; reporting times; planned use of discretion
- ATC Problems/Language/Late Changes/Frequency Congestion**  
 Foreign ATC RTF phraseology; vectoring into adverse weather; SID clearance phraseology; LHR non-standard RTF phraseology - ILS final approach on the glideslope; heading clearances; ATIS 'information'; late runway allocation by ATC; TCAS/transponder problems; frequency confusion; definition of 'platform height'
- ICAO Runway/Taxiway Designators**  
 Problems following LHR stand renumbering; lack of clarity with new ICAO designators at some UK airfields
- Check Lists/SOPs**  
 SOPs and PNRS; ground checks; SIDs/Alt/FL; take-off performance procedures; cabin secure checks
- Crew Sickness/Company Policies**  
 Management of sickness/absence policies-conflict with ANO responsibilities; individuals operating with cold symptoms/ reporting when sick; management attitudes; trigger points; foreign operator sickness policy
- Security/IDs/Flight Deck Doors**  
 Search exemption forms; failure to follow SOPs for flight deck doors; foreign security issues; use of passes; displaying IDs
- Technical Issues on Aircraft**  
 Operation with a/skid U/S; temp limited engine; flight deck door design; operation with U/S APU
- Use of Language**  
 Language used by ATC in France; misheard clearances; heli-deck clearances; runway/taxiway clearances; ATC instructions to stop
- Cabin Crew related Issues**  
 Misinterpretation of Company FTL Schemes by either Company or Aircraft Commander; alleged pressure by either flight crew or Company to work into 'Discretion'; Crewing Departments changing rosters at short notice; disturbance of scheduled rest

### SVFR CLEARANCES - A REMINDER FOR ATCOs

**Report Text:** I am reading Issue No. 20 of GA FEEDBACK and would like to add the following comment.

The report states that pilots of single-engined aircraft often request and receive SVFR clearance to overfly cities at a height that would not permit them to comply with Rule 5.

It does not always happen like that however. Last summer I was flying off the south coast shore line at 1,000 feet when the ATC unit of the large airfield I was talking to offered me, completely unprompted, clearance to overfly the adjoining large town at that height. No doubt this was done with the best of intentions as it would have expedited my journey. I declined the offer and stated the reasons why. The controller I was talking to sounded quite put out that I had rejected his offer.

Many pilots may have believed that this offer from ATC would have been in order and accepted it thus putting themselves, and others, at risk.

Whilst ultimate responsibility rests with the pilot, ATC units should not make offers which might trap the unwary or inexperienced.

**CHIRP Comment:** Although Rule 5 Para (2)(a) provides that an aircraft on a special VFR clearance or on a route notified for the purpose of the Rule is not required to overfly any congested area at 1,500ft or greater above the highest fixed obstacle within 600 metres of the aircraft, the aircraft is required to fly at a height that would enable the aircraft to alight clear of the congested area in the event of a failure of a power unit (Rule 5 Para (1)(a)(i) refers).

Whilst the primary responsibility always rests with the pilot not to accept an inappropriate clearance, increased awareness among ATCOs of the 'land clear' requirement might be beneficial.

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### ATC 'STOP' INSTRUCTION

**Report Text:** Although I was not on the affected flight, I witnessed the use of the "Stop Immediately, acknowledge" R/T call by ATC for wholly inappropriate reasons. Thankfully the crew concerned (a non-UK operator) either ignored the instruction or didn't hear it.

The Tower made the call as the previous departing traffic reported that they may have hit a bird on take off.

Before switching to flying, I trained as an ATCO, and remember the guidance for the "Stop" command being non-existent. I'm sure that the seriousness of rejecting a take off is not fully understood by many controllers.

In my company a Co-Pilot can only call "Stop" for Fire, Engine Failure, Configuration Warning, Runway

Blocked or Serious Control Difficulties. A Captain can call "Stop" for anything, but above 80 kts this should be limited to the Co-Pilots list of reasons and major malfunctions only. A dead bird is not a reason to stop.

Perhaps guidance for Controllers for the "Stop" R/T command should be along the lines of: "For life threatening reasons only, that would not be evident to the operating pilots e.g. an aircraft going around that poses a risk of collision."

**CHIRP** Comment: Pilots should be aware that in May 2003 CAA (SRG) issued additional guidance to controllers relating to the cancellation of a take-off clearance in the form of a text amendment to the Manual of Air Traffic Services Part 1, Section 2 Chapter 1 Page 9 Paras 14.2 and 14.3 as follows:

14.2 The cancellation of a take-off clearance after an aircraft has commenced its take-off roll should only occur when the aircraft will be in serious and imminent danger should it continue. Controllers should be aware of the potential for an aircraft to overrun the end of the runway if the take-off is abandoned, particularly in the case of a large aircraft or when the runway braking may be adversely affected. Because of this risk, even if a take-off clearance is cancelled, the commander of the aircraft may consider it safer to continue the take-off than to attempt to stop the aircraft.

14.3 Controllers should also be aware of the possibility that an aircraft that abandons its take-off may suffer overheated brakes or other abnormal situation and should be prepared to declare the appropriate category of emergency or to provide other suitable assistance.

The RTF phraseology to be used in cancelling a take off when the take-off run has commenced is given in MATS Part 1 Appendix E and conforms to that recommended by ICAO:

"ABC123 stop immediately - I say again ABC123 stop immediately - acknowledge."

Whilst the logic in providing controllers with advice on how to notify an aircraft of a potentially catastrophic situation of which the flight crew might be unaware is understandable, the justification for issuing a simple 'Stop immediately' instruction at a critical time in the take-off phase of flight requires very careful consideration.

Flight deck SOPs for aborting/continuing a take-off, including the use of the executive instruction 'Stop', have been carefully developed to provide crews with simple decision paths for reacting to serious emergencies during all phases of the take off; these SOPs are practised and routinely briefed prior to commencing the take-off run to ensure that the crewmembers react appropriately.

The sudden intervention of an ATCO issuing a 'Stop immediately' instruction at a critical stage in the take-off might in some circumstances significantly influence the action that the flight crew might otherwise take in reacting to an emergency situation. Therefore, if the requirement for such a call from ATC can be justified, it would seem to be essential that the circumstance in which it might be used should be more precisely defined for the benefit of both controllers and flight crew.

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## TCAS RA INCIDENT

**Report Text:** Another DHL 757 / Tupolev accident? - Not in this country; couldn't happen?

Whilst flying a twin turboprop at FL170 in ### sector we received a TCAS Traffic Advisory then a Resolution Advisory to Descend which we complied with instantly. The Descend, Maintain and Clear all happened within a 15-second window.

Contact with ATC revealed that the offending aircraft (also a twin turboprop) had transponder problems, which ATC knew about and which was giving spurious altitude information. It had flown directly over the top of us, opposite direction with 1,000ft separation. During the TCAS event the TCAS had showed only 500 ft separation, as the other aircraft's transponder had spuriously informed our TCAS it was only 500 ft above us, hence the descent command.

What if the spurious info had said the aircraft was 1,500ft lower than actual, or 500 ft below us, we would have been given a Climb command and climbed directly into the path of the oncoming aircraft, scary stuff! So then 50/50 we are here now to write this.

As ATC knew and the other aircraft knew, why not use mode A only? And why not use lateral separation? Interestingly, as well as us, another flight on the frequency questioned ATC about this incident and called attention to the potential for a more serious outcome.

ATC said separation had not been compromised, but how did they know? Presumably their information comes from the same source, secondary radar from the transponders. Why were we not advised in advance? If we had been would we still have followed the TCAS command? Certainly, it is mandatory in our company.

My opinion is that if an aircraft has a faulty transponder it MUST be used mode A only (mandatory) and ATC MUST (mandatory) laterally separate the offending aircraft from all others.

Interestingly no-one has contacted me regarding this incident despite raising an ASR and MOR.

**CHIRP** Comment: In the follow-up enquiries following receipt of this report it was apparent that the significance of the interaction between the false

Mode C transmission and the TCAS RA did not appear to have been recognised when the formal report was reviewed.

The full circumstances of the incident were brought to the attention of the Chairman of the UK Airprox Board and NATS by CHIRP to permit a more detailed investigation to be made into whether there were any useful lessons to be learned from the incident.

As a result of their subsequent enquiries into the incident NATS has issued a safety notice restating ATC responsibilities during a TCAS RA and are shortly to issue a further safety notice re-stating that in the event that corrupt Mode C data is detected ATCOs are to instruct pilots to switch off Mode C or, if this is not possible, to select code A0000.

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## RUNWAY CLEARANCE PHRASEOLOGY - GROUND VEHICLES

**Report Text:** Twice now I have been on the Take-off roll at ### and have been aware, at about 100kts accelerating, of a call from ATC of "ABC One, clear enter the R/W at Alpha One".

The first time this happened I made a telephone call to ATC. The second time I submitted a Company report.

My company raised the matter with ATC, who responded that the phraseology used in issuing clearances to vehicles and including aircraft is the same as is required for all airports in the UK. If a conditional clearance (e.g. after the landing ### ....) is appropriate then one is issued; if not a standard runway entry clearance is given. Allied to this is the requirement to state the position for which the clearance is valid e.g. '..... enter at Alpha One'. The positions referred to are in the majority those that are used by aircraft and are part of the taxiway routeings therefore being part of the airport layout and understood by the users.

My gripe is not with ### ATC which I hold in high regard, but with the National system, as it would appear that ### ATC are simply abiding by the CAA ATC norm, as they have indicated in their response.

A pilot should not be put in a position of trying to work out his position in relation to any intersection at 100kts accelerating, as this might distract him from another event during this critical phase of flight. Indeed, in poor visibility, or in the case of unfamiliarity with an airport, he might be forgiven for carrying out a high-speed abort if he thinks that there is any chance of ATC clearing a vehicle onto the runway in error.

My plea is to standardise the phraseology so that pilots hear the same type of clearance that they hear with respect to other aircraft, e.g. "ABC One, after the aircraft taking off from right to left, you are clear enter R/WY ## at A1, behind."

**CHIRP Comment:** The report was referred to CAA (SRG). A subsequent response from CAA (SRG) Air Traffic Services Standards Department (ATSSD) justified the existing ATC phraseology, as described in the report, and emphasised that it was the flight crew's responsibility to brief themselves on the airport layout and thus be aware of the runway intersection designators.

In a further submission to ATSSD we questioned whether the existing procedure adequately acknowledged the flight deck workload during take-off, the effect of receiving an unanticipated RTF call - as the reporter had stated, and whether additional factors such as non-UK flight crews and a crew's lack of familiarity with an airfield layout had been taken into consideration. The matter has now been referred to the Runway Incursion Working Group for further consideration.

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## PREFERENTIAL RUNWAY OPERATION

**Report Text:** I am concerned by the use of Rwy ## at AAA (UK Regional Airport) and the necessity to fly a non-precision approach due to work-in-progress (WIP) and the ILS glide path being unserviceable, when an alternate runway with an ILS (albeit only Category 1 due to the WIP) is available.

The reason ATC give is Noise Preferential Routing (NPR) and unless required due operational reasons, ie performance, then the alternate runway will not be available.

I understand the requirements for NPR and the need for good neighbourly relations with the local population, however given all the accident data and research into non-precision approaches at night, I feel, given the choice of a Localiser/DME or an ILS approach at night, for safety reasons the ILS should be used.

Recently I flew into AAA at night with the wind calm and mist patches. Whilst the weather was above the minima for the Localiser/DME approach to Runway ## the ILS approach to the alternate runway would have been the safer option but was not available due NPR.

**CHIRP Comment:** This report was discussed by the CHIRP Air Transport Advisory Board. The Head of Flight Operations Standards CAA (SRG) advised the Board that following the fatal accident at Zurich, which involved a non-precision approach at night, CAA (SRG) had commissioned a report on the impact of environmental factors on the safety of flight operations (CAA Paper 2004/08).

The report did not identify any serious safety risks but concluded that there were three problem areas where there were "reasoned concerns by safety Experts". The first of these in order of importance was:

"Para 5.1.2 a) The evidence is that the use of non-precision approaches solely for environmental reasons is unwise. This is a policy decision and not a requirement for additional work."

Following publication of the report, CAA (SRG) established an Environmental Working Group to review issues on this topic. This report has been referred to the Working Group with the objective of providing improved guidance to pilots and air traffic managers on compliance with NPRs.

Weather conditions for the use of preferential runways are promulgated in the AIP and normally specify runway surface and wind conditions only. If the weather conditions are such that you consider a precision approach to be your preferred option for safety reasons, request an approach to the alternate runway, but be aware that such a request might incur a delay depending on other arriving/departing traffic.

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### FALSE ILS LOCALISER CAPTURES

**Report Text:** For some weeks, on and off, LHR Arrival ATIS has been warning of 'possible false capture of 27L Localiser when approaching from North'. Most people have imagined that this has something to do with the new Terminal 5 structures, and it is understood that "Tels are looking into it".

Today the pilot of a non-UK carrier reported that he was aware of the regular ATIS warnings about false capture from the North, but he had just experienced a false capture from the SOUTH.

**CHIRP Comment:** It is understood that the problem of false localiser captures is associated with a building (not T5) and thus there might not be a short-term solution to this problem.

Whereas there have been a number of reports of false captures when approaching from the North only two cases including that referenced in the report above have been reported when approaching from the South. If you should experience the latter problem, please report it. Also, whenever possible, it is good practice to confirm the aircraft's correct alignment with the localiser course by means other than the localiser indication.

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### TAXIING CLOSE ENCOUNTER

**Report Text:** At a large Southern European airfield we had been cleared to taxi to the holding point of the departure runway crossing an inner and outer taxiway en route.

I released the parking brake and started to move forwards. Almost immediately I saw an AAA (*National Airline*) A320 on my left hand side clearly going much faster than we were. My sighting coincided with a call from the ground controller telling us to give way to the "opposite direction AAA" taxiing on ###

taxiway. The instructions were quite specific but I had focussed completely on the A320 on my left hand side, silently cursing the controller for yet again giving priority to their national carrier. As I began to follow my given route to the threshold, the A320 came to stop and I began to wonder what was going to happen next. At that moment the First Officer said "Stop!" and I immediately applied the brakes as I sensed the urgency in his voice. Then I saw it. An AAA (*National Airline*) CRJ moving at speed; probably to help us out, coming towards us on the taxiway I was about to cross. I would say without any doubt that, had it not been for the actions of the First Officer, I would have attempted to cross the first taxiway probably causing a collision with the CRJ in the process.

My fault? I initially tried to tell myself no. ATC should have amended our taxi instructions and told us to hold at a suitable apron holding point. They should have been more specific about the aircraft type shouldn't they? Basically, of course it was my fault. I allowed myself to become distracted at a very busy airfield at a very busy time of the night.

Thanks to the First Officer I'll get to have another go at the airfield in question in a couple of day's time but my cup of luck is a little emptier than it was and I have learned from the experience.

**CHIRP Comment:** The use of an airline's name alone to identify conflicting traffic can all too easily lead to misidentification and an incident such as this, which could have had a much more serious outcome. Regrettably, this practice is common at some non-UK airfields

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### RTF PHRASEOLOGY - SPEED CONTROL

**Report Text:** Early morning departure from a major UK airport. Turn made at AAA VOR speed 193 kts at flap 'one' cleaning up passing 3,000' climbing to 4,000'.

Handed over to Area Control. Told to "KEEP THE SPEED climb 4,000ft" Crew confused by this! Normally expect to accelerate to 250kts unless released from speed control.

But did ATC mean - do not expect to be released from control - maintain 250kts? Or did ATC mean - maintain current speed of 193kts? Or did I mishear no speed control?

I called at 4,000' to clarify. In fact, the ATC meaning was maintain 250kts. The call "keep the speed" from ATC was unnecessary because 250kts is what we expected to do anyway. It caused confusion at a time of high workload for both aircrew and ATC and led to another RT call on a busy frequency.

P.S. I think I repeated back "no speed control" because that seemed to make the most sense. This was not picked up by ATC and, if we had not clarified

the situation, would have done the opposite to ATC's intention!

**CHIRP** Comment: In the case of some standard departures where speed control is routinely not used, a phrase such as that reported is used by ATCOs to emphasise to pilots those occasions on which the ATC speed restriction is to be observed. The alternate phrases "Maintain Two Five Zero knots" or "Keep the ATC speed restriction" are clearer than that quoted in this report.

From a flight deck perspective, if you are in the slightest doubt as to the intent of an ATC instruction - check with the controller. The couple of seconds it takes can save a lot of embarrassment and a lot of paperwork!

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### ROSTER INSTABILITY

**CHIRP** Narrative: As we noted in the previous issue, the number of reports received relating to roster instability, where an individual's rostered duties were subject to frequent changes after being published to accommodate company requirements or maintain an individual within the maximum permitted flying hours limits, had increased throughout 2003 and 2004. The reports involved only a small number of UK AOC Holders. The following report is a further example of the reported problem:

**Report Text:** Further to Chirp Issue 72 and roster instability, I can confirm that in my Company, the Rostering Department know the roster is obsolete on the day that it is sent out. There is a view within Rostering that crew can be telephoned at any time, and that should crewmembers have appointments outside of rostered duty hours, then these should be advised to crewing in order to protect that time from a change. It is my view that this is a restraint on crew time and therefore outside the scope of CAP 371.

Cap 371 states:

".....Aircraft operators are expected to appreciate the relationship between the frequency and pattern of scheduled flying duty periods and rest periods and time off, and give due consideration to the cumulative effects of working long hours interspersed with minimum rest."

And

".....consultation between operators and crew to agree basic roster concepts which ensure adequate rest prior to flight but, within that constraint, takes account of the commercial requirements of the company."

Neither of these statements are being fulfilled at my, and I suspect many other companies, and it is high time that CAA (SRG) enforced the above spirit of FTL.

Since 9/11 companies are trying to operate at lower staff levels to reduce costs in the increasingly competitive market. Fewer crewmembers means

more roster changes. When coupled with maintenance pressure and technical problems it is inevitable that serious fatigue will follow.

It is all well and good to quote the responsibility on the crew member to ensure he is not operating fatigued, but this is the real world, we need to keep our jobs to pay the rent.

Companies now definitely see CAP 371 permitted hours as a target to be achieved, rather than a maximum. A lorry driver must take rest away from his cab after four and a half hours. We can go nearly twelve hours without so much as a scheduled loo break! There has to be something wrong here.

**CHIRP** Comment: As a result of CHIRP reports and other information CAA (SRG) in conjunction with a number of UK AOC holders have investigated the causes of roster instability and available solutions. These investigations have shown that many of the reported problems are not simply the result of inadequate crewing ratios but quite often the quality of the short-term tactical crew change decisions that are made in response to an operational, technical or personnel problems, where these changes fail to consider the longer term roster implications for some of the crew members involved. The limited capability of some computerised rostering programmes to evaluate recovery options is another factor. In the case of some operators with a relatively small number of crews at a number of bases, separated geographically, the difficulty in providing adequate standby cover has also been a factor in roster disruption. In the IT sector, the influence of commercial changes is probably one of the most significant factors and reducing the length of the published roster period is being assessed as a method of reducing the disruption of individual rosters.

Whilst the commercial imperative is always present, it is nevertheless the case that there are UK operators in all sectors of the industry that achieve high levels of manning efficiency and yet do not experience the levels of roster instability such as those described in CHIRP reports. It is hoped that CAA (SRG) will continue to identify and promote 'best practice' in the management of rosters and manning ratios, and ensure that the spirit and intent of CAP 371 is complied with by all UK AOC Holders.

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### FLIGHT DECK CHECKS BY CABIN CREW

**Report Text:** Further to Issue 72 - Do Not Disturb. Regarding cabin crew 20 minute checks of the flight/tech crew - custom and practice has now altered the timing of these calls to one every 30 mins, and set at easy clock times i.e. on the hour/half past. Most crew now admit that 20 minute calls are not necessary, annoying and intrusive, and also become erratic in their regularity. 30 minute calls (as used by a foreign carrier) make eminent

sense to me, and they are easier to remember and to keep tags on. Will the CAA consider a change of the rule to actual custom and practice?

**CHIRP Comment:** CAA (SRG) does not mandate a specific time interval between cabin crew checks of the flight deck, but that each operator must ensure that regular checks are made. CAA (SRG) advises that a check every thirty minutes would comply with the requirement.

## CABIN CREW REPORTS

### CABIN BAGGAGE

**Report Text:** This A/C type has been in service for a relatively short time. It has no overhead locker space available around both Door 2 and Door 3 areas. At the front of the cabin are two wardrobes which are for coats and some hand baggage from the front row.

Prior to boarding I asked the aircraft dispatcher to request the Gate to keep an eye on the hand baggage, as this sector was overbooked and the station is notorious for excess hand baggage. Half way through boarding we had bags in the Galley with the whole crew trying to move around the luggage already onboard to find space for more with me making repeated PA's about stowage.

The problem began to escalate and at about fifteen minutes prior to our scheduled departure I informed the Captain who said the holds were closed.

The dispatcher saw we had a problem and said we'd have to deal with it. The Captain agreed to take several "wheelie bags" into the flight deck. I wanted the hold re-opened to remove these and those we had by now wedged floor-to-ceiling in the two wardrobes. This was refused on grounds of an on-time departure.

**CHIRP Comment:** Flight crew should never permit any item that cannot be secured and would thus constitute a loose article hazard in unanticipated turbulence or an emergency manoeuvre to be placed on the flight deck.

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### WELL RESTED?

**Report Text:** Serving flight crew refreshments I noticed the First Officer (F/O) was drinking black coffee. I learned the F/O was feeling tired due to only being rostered for the flight at 2200hrs the previous night, having originally been rostered to operate a later flight; the report time for this flight had been prior to 0700hrs.

On commenting on the lack of notification, which was significantly less than the minimum notice of duty, I learned that the Company had allegedly begged the F/O to accept this flight as they had no-one else. Although the company was informed that the F/O

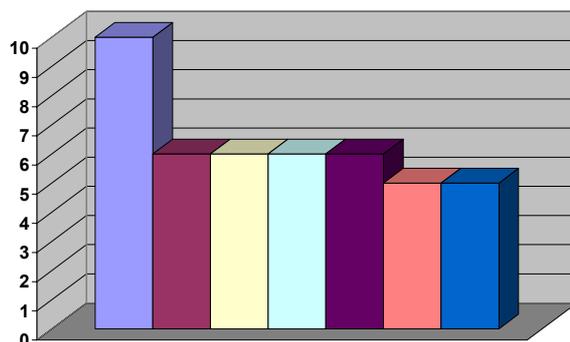
was more than three hours away from Base, they still requested the F/O to report for the flight. Instead of refusing, the F/O drove through the night and reported for the Duty. The Captain was aware of the situation before take-off and apparently made no comment about the F/O's fitness to fly. The flight subsequently suffered a delay and the flight crew ended up operating approximately a 15-hour Duty day.

I feel very worried towards our Company knowingly requesting a pilot to operate after insufficient rest. I just wonder how far they will push the barriers to cover operations.

**CHIRP Comment:** If the circumstances were as described, the First Officer should not have accepted the duty and the Captain should have refused to allow the First Officer to operate. The report was forwarded to CAA (SRG) to permit the Authority the opportunity to review the company's policy and training on flying when unfit.

## ENGINEER REPORTS

**Most Frequent Engineering Issues Received:  
Jan 03 - Dec 04**



- Security Problems/ID and Vehicle Passes**  
 Displaying IDs when working aircraft on the Ramp; getting spares airside; airside vehicle inspections
- Fatigue/Excessive Hours/Manning Shift Patterns**  
 Qualified engineer staffing levels; inadequate recruitment; pressure to work more hours/unattractive shift patterns
- Operational Problems**  
 Pre-flight checks by crews; suspected fuel leak
- Maintenance Sign-offs/Commercial Pressure**  
 Lack of qualified staff; commercial pressure to produce a/c off maintenance on time
- Ground Operations Problems**  
 Lack of available stands resulting in excessive aircraft movements; security sealing interrupting engineering work
- Qualifications/Personal Certification Levels**  
 Change-over to Jar 66 licences; examination problems; staff signing above their certification levels
- Equipment/Spares Problems**  
 Lack of spares; import problems; instinctive equipment controls.

## ARE YOU QUALIFIED?

**Report Text:** Pre-departure walk around checks were carried out by myself and the Captain. Nil defects.

Whilst talking to the Capt at the bottom of the stairs I noticed a handling agent employee opened a latch securing No1 engine lower fan cowl.

I asked the Captain if he had any knowledge of this he replied "No". We called over to the person and asked what he was doing, to which he replied, "I am a trainer and am trying to test my men".

He was told his actions contravened the ANO and he reattached the cowl. I checked this and certified the pre-departure check in the Log.

The Captain was furious with this person and stated that he would raise a company report to this effect.

To my knowledge the person involved is not qualified on any aircraft.

**CHIRP Comment:** The action by the 'trainer' was inexcusable. Any OJT training for Handling Agent employees should be defined in a proper procedure, which should specifically prohibit any such training on an operational aircraft without appropriately qualified supervision.

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## INSTINCTIVE CONTROLS

**Report Text:** Aircraft engineers are trained that if you pull the control column back you go up - push it forwards you go down. Basic stuff, ingrained into you through years of common use. Yet! - The "Wise Lift" and "Gennie" lift service platforms operate in reverse to this, i.e. push column forward go up, pull control stick back - go down, (an accident waiting to happen). When poised under the wing of an aircraft changing a valve, with basically millimetres to spare beneath the wing, it takes a very conscious effort NOT to react as trained and push the man lift 'down control' forwards; for if you did you would collide with the underside of the wing, with a large powerful piece of machinery. I had the same problem subsequently although this time when above and extended over a wing surface area with the same machinery, again it is instinctive to pull the "man lift" control stick back to go up, but of course this drops the machine instead! Clever eh!

My main point is that these machines are being used in a close and very hazardous environment. And our instinctive training for control columns is at direct odds to the controls on the man lifts. It takes a real conscious effort to look back and remember that the machine works back to front to your aircraft training. (Okay for building sites I guess not aircraft).

And yes, we have been trained on the man lift, but when your mind is on aircraft work, you don't always come back to the machinery you are using as alertly as you could. Instinct takes over, with very potentially dangerous and damaging results.

Several near misses later I feel obliged to write this down.

**CHIRP Comment:** The operator was advised of the reporter's comments on the use of this equipment. In a subsequent response the operator noted that although the equipment complied with EU Requirements, they would raise this issue with the equipment manufacturer.

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## NOISY WORKPLACE

**Report Text:** I am an A&C engineer based at a Regional Airport. The hangar and adjacent buildings are steel framed un-insulated/soundproofed metal clad structures. These are positioned approximately 50m from the Compass Bay.

Previously, ground running had been withdrawn from the Compass Bay on Health and Safety grounds. But with a change of airport staffing it has been deemed acceptable to do ground running at idle on large passenger aircraft facing these buildings on an unlimited time basis. Additionally it has been deemed to be "safe" to allow periods of 20 minutes per day at high power. The airport did take sound measurements and these showed the sound level to be above 90db at idle.

Not only have representations to the airport fallen on deaf ears but an alternate running bay is available and appears not to be used as it is not "handy" to get to due distances involved to get manpower and the aircraft to the safer alternate running bay. Surely under the Health and Safety Act, the airport is responsible for removing this source of noise above the legal limits if an alternative is available, which it is.

This does not just effect me but also staffing in the adjacent buildings that do not have this resource. A quote from the airport staff that did the one monitoring of the noise sums it up "How can you work in this?" Over one period I had to seek medical attention for severe ear pain and ringing which lasted several days.

**CHIRP Comment:** The HSE were approached on this issue on the reporter's behalf and they advised that a noise survey had been carried out, and the limitations described by the reporter had been imposed as a result of the survey.

A local airport official had been charged with monitoring the situation and the reporter was advised to keep a diary of ground running activities and to report any occurrences of engine-running outside the permitted limits to the local official.

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## CAA (SRG) ATSINS

The following CAA (SRG) ATS Standards Department ATSINS have been issued since October 2004:

CAA (SRG) ATS Information Notices are published on the CAA (SRG) website -

[www.caa.co.uk/publications/publications.asp?action=sercat&id=2](http://www.caa.co.uk/publications/publications.asp?action=sercat&id=2)

### **Number 54 - Issued 19 October 2004**

Action to be Taken in the Event that an Aircraft on the Ground is on Fire or Where There are Signs of Fire

### **Number 55 - Issued 19 October 2004**

Action to be Taken by Controllers on Unknown Aircraft in Class D and Class E Airspace

### **Number 56 - Issued 19 October 2004**

Recommended Action to be Taken in the Event that an Aircraft on the Ground is on Fire or Where There are Signs of Fire

### **Number 57 - Issued 27 October 2004**

Influencing The Way in Which Air Traffic Services Are Regulated

### **Number 58 - Issued 18 November 2004**

Requirement for ATS Procedures to Manage the Unavailability of Unit Facilities, Including a Radio Communication Service

### **Number 59 - Issued 10 December 2004**

The Introduction of Combined Air Traffic Control Service and Licensed Aerodrome Facility Safety Audits

### **Number 60 - Issued 25 January 2005**

Publication of the Second Edition of CAP 717 Radar Control - Collision Avoidance Concepts

4. Cabin Crew Training - Appendix 1 to JAR-OPS 1.1015 -Touch Drills

5. Mobile Phones with Flight Mode Facility and Palm Held Devices

### **24/2004**

1. Flight Crew Training

### **25/2004**

1. Runway Incursion Prevention - Recommended Best Practice for Radiotelephony (R/T) Phraseology, Procedures and Airport Taxiing Operations

### **26/2004**

1. Strategic Lateral Offset Procedure in North Atlantic (NAT) Airspace

### **27/2004**

1. Clarification of MMEL Definitions

### **28/2004**

1. ACJ Ops 1.345 - Ice and Other Contaminants

2. Carriage of Portable Breathing Equipment (PBE) - Dangerous Goods Requirement

3. Portable Tracking Devices (PEDs) - Hybrid Tracking Devices

4. Procedures for the Deployment of an Evacuation Slide

### **29/2004**

1. JAR-26 Additional Airworthiness Requirements for Operations

### **1/2005**

1. Joint Operations Evaluation Boards

## CAA (SRG) CAP 747 MANDATORY REQ'S FOR AIRWORTHINESS

Issue 2 September 2004 - This publication provides a single point reference for mandatory airworthiness information and airworthiness directives for civil aircraft registered in the UK. In particular it includes those mandatory items previously issued as Airworthiness Notices.

## CAA (SRG) FODCOMS

The following CAA (SRG) FODCOMS have been issued since October 2004:

CAA (SRG) Flight Operations Department Communications are published on the CAA (SRG) website - [www.srg.caa.co.uk](http://www.srg.caa.co.uk)

### **22/2004**

1. Non-renewal of Official Record Series 4 General Exemption - Lockable Flight Deck Door

2. Emergency Locator Transmitters

3. Single Pilot Crew Resource Management (CRM) Forum - 27 October 2004

### **23/2004**

1. FAA Advisory Circular on In-flight Fires

2. Cabin Crew Training for Icing Conditions

3. Placarding of Emergency Equipment Carried in the Passenger Compartment

## US AVIATION SAFETY REPORTING SYSTEM

This report is reproduced from NASA ASRS Callback Newsletter Issue 297 - June 2004 and serves as a useful reminder that MCD problems are not a thing of the past.

### MCD CHECKS AND OIL LOSS

The reporter, a mechanic, was assigned the #2 engine and IDG magnetic chip detectors (MCD) to service on an overnight stop on a B737-800. He advised the inspector of his assignment (the FAA require an independent inspection by dedicated inspectors for some activities) who responded that a separate inspection was no longer required, the work card having recently been revised.

After servicing the engine oils the reporter proceeded to inspect the MCDs in accordance with the work card. The packings (seals) were replaced and scavenge screens installed and the MCDs installed making sure they were in and locked, verified with reference to red alignment marks. The area was cleaned down and no leaks observed: the access panel was closed.

On the first flight the next day, during the climb, the low oil pressure light came on and the crew observed that the oil level was low. The engine was shut down and the aircraft diverted.

The engine had run without oil beyond the allowable limit and was changed.

It was subsequently determined that one of the MCDs was not locked and oil pressure had pushed the plug outwards. However, the close fitting cowl had prevented the MCD from dropping out and the secondary feature to prevent oil loss, the NRV, had been prevented from closing properly, hence the oil loss.

The conclusion reached was that the separate inspection should be reinstated and an engine run carried out to check for oil leaks from the MCDs, and engine oil filters.

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### BACK ISSUES

Back issues of AIR TRANSPORT FEEDBACK; GA FEEDBACK; CABIN CREW FEEDBACK and MARITIME FEEDBACK are all available on our website: [www.chirp.co.uk](http://www.chirp.co.uk)

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