

CHIRP FEEDBACK

Issue No: 94

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BULLYING AND SAFETY

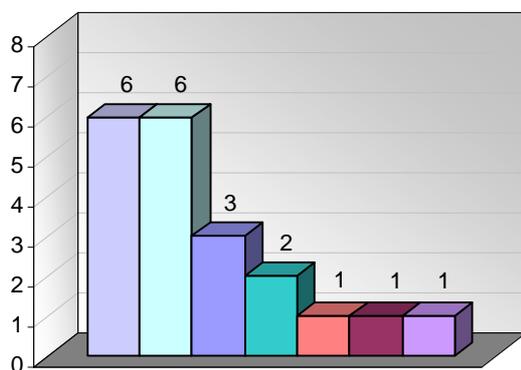
Report Text: I was the victim of a sustained bullying campaign by one individual at work. At the time of my difficulties I sought assistance from HR and management but was advised that if I took action a 'black cloud' would follow me around for the rest of my career.

As a relatively new ATCO at the time I was intimidated by the whole thing and just kept quiet, kept my head down and moved on. I was not able to discuss the matter for several years such was the level of distress it caused me. The effect it had on me became a safety concern for me when operating and as a result I took steps to remove myself from the situation on safety grounds, as the distraction of having this person alongside me was taking away from my primary task of providing safe air traffic control. I have always felt that this was not the correct solution, as the problem should have been addressed at its root, but I felt I had no other option at the time. Management were well aware of the issue but it was completely swept under the carpet and eventually resolved by rostering us on different shifts, not addressing the real problem at all. Since then I have been made aware that the person concerned behaved similarly with several other individuals who have been unfortunate enough to come into contact.

I finally confided in some colleagues about my experience and was horrified to learn that of the individuals I told, all had also experienced different levels of bullying, either when they were trainees or as newly valid ATCOs. This is a time when individuals are particularly vulnerable both in terms of well-being and in terms of safety and I was shocked to learn it seemed to be fairly widespread, with managers having been apparently aware in most cases and not taking appropriate action. Several of my colleagues relocated in order to get away from the situation and one suffered a stress-related illness. We are all still controlling and

ATC REPORTS

Most Frequent ATC Issues Received
12 Months to March 2010



AIR TRANSPORT FEEDBACK and Report Forms are also available on the **CHIRP** website - www.chirp.co.uk

An Air Transport Safety Newsletter

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

now in much happier situations but this is in spite of the bullying, which in all cases we had to resolve ourselves by moving or else just 'toughing it out' until the bullies moved on to someone new.

My Unit does have a bullying & harassment policy but it is made a mockery of by situations such as these. There is nowhere to go and no one to get support from if you are unfortunate enough to become a victim of such behaviour. It can affect your entire life not to mention safety at work.

In such a safety critical role as ours you should be able to give 100% of your attention to the task of maintaining safe, orderly & expeditious air traffic control without the enormous distraction of worrying about who's plugging in next to you, to the extent where you might not call for a sector to be split in case that person comes back to 'assist'. We need to be able to coordinate with each other and expect a civilised response, not be ignored or shouted at when there is aircraft safety at stake.

It has taken me some considerable time to even be able to build up the courage to report this through CHIRP but I feel strongly that this issue should no longer be ignored.

CHIRP Comment: Many organisations have a policy for dealing with this type of issue; therefore, the best course of action is to attempt to resolve the matter using your company's in-house reporting scheme initially.

However, if as this reporter found, the company procedure failed to address safety-related concerns, the independent confidential process does provide an alternative way of having the matter reviewed.

After discussing the circumstances in detail with the reporter and with the reporter's consent the concerns were represented to the senior safety manager, following which the reporter was invited, through CHIRP, to discuss their concerns directly and in confidence with the senior manager.

Subsequently, the reporter confirmed that the discussions had been extremely positive and that a number of management actions were being taken to investigate whether there were any more recent similar instances of bullying and to take appropriate action if any instances were identified. The reporter also confirmed their satisfaction with the manner in which their concerns had been dealt with.

SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONS / ATSINS

The following CAA (SRG) ATS Standards Department ATSINS and Supplementary Instructions (SI) to CAP 493 MATS Part 1 have been issued since **2 February 2010**:

SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONS:

Number 2010/02 - Issued: 17 March 2010 - Effective: Immediate

Reporting of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs)

Number 2010/03 - Issued: 17 March 2010 - Effective: Immediate

Malicious Use of Lasers Against Aircraft and ATS Personnel

Number 2010/04 - Issued 30 March 2010 - Effective: Immediate

Procedures and Phraseology Concerning Level Restrictions Associated with Standard Instrument Departures

SUPPLEMENTARY AMENDMENT (SA):

Number 2010/01 - Issued: 1 March 2010 - Effective: Immediate

Surveillance Ops

ATSINS:

Number 1 (Issue 3) - Issued 31 March 2010

Air Traffic Services Information Notices (ATSINS)

Number 175 - Issued 10 February 2010

CAP 670 Supplementary Amendments

Number 176 - Issued 18 February 2010

Introduction of Air Traffic Standards RSS News Feeds

Number 177 - Issued 24 March 2010

Air Traffic Standards 'On Notice' Procedure

Number 178 - Issued 6 April 2010

Notification of Amendment to the Air Navigation Order (ANO) 2009

Number 179 - Issued 7 April 2010

Re-issue of Air Traffic Controller Licences

Number 180 - Issued 19 April 2010

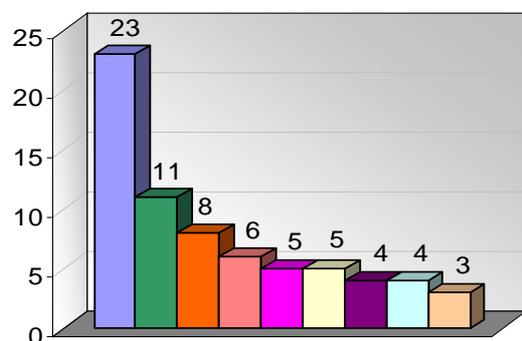
CAA Website: ATS Requirements Overview

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

www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?categoryid=33 and click on the link 'Search for a CAA Publication'

ENGINEER REPORTS

Most Frequent Engineering Issues Received: 12 Months to March 2010



NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS CONTRACTED STAFF

Report Text: During my time working here as a contractor, I have experienced first-hand what I consider to be a very poor attitude towards their contract maintenance staff which I consider to be detrimental to human factors and the overall quality of the operation. There are a few inspectors who take a very negative attitude towards contract mechanics/technicians, and treat them as if they were less than second class citizens, and there is also an element of bullying and ridicule going on.

There is also a very poor approach to giving the contractors any respite and time off. After working a total of ten 12-hour days I took a day off, only to be called to say that I wasn't needed for another week.

Now, OK, that's contracting, but the general rule of thumb is, and I quote from a senior member of staff from the company "if you're here today, you'll be here tomorrow". This is a terrible attitude as it puts the fear of unemployment into contractors, some of whom I know work 12-hour days for weeks on end, so they don't get "bombed out" by the company.

Is this really a necessary practice to embody in today's aerospace environment? I don't think so. I sense some of the permanent LAE's like the power of employment they have over the contractors and even enjoy making them feel vulnerable in this time of

economic stress. Why can't contractors work the same shift as the permanent staff for example? Because I feel that management try their absolute hardest to maintain as clear a divide between the elite of the permanent staff and the 'trashy contractors' as possible. OK it might be bad politics but when contractors feel they have to work all the hours God sends without a day off for weeks, for fear they might get stood down for a week or two, I feel they are overstepping the line of safety.

Lessons Learned: I believe there should be some reminder to the company that they are abusing the relaxed non-regulated working hours for contract staff and that they are being monitored for it.

CHIRP Comment: This is one of a number of reports related to contract engineering staff, in particular, being required to work for extended periods of time. Advice on this matter was sought from both the CAA and the Health and Safety Executive.

The legislation applicable to UK engineers in the air transport industry is the EU Directive on working time; this was issued in the UK under 'The Working Time Regulations (WTR) 1998' (Statutory Instrument 1998 No. 1833) and subsequently amended by 'The Working Time (Amendment) Regulations 2003 (Statutory Instrument 2003 No. 1684). It should be noted that the 2003 amendment removed the earlier exemption for Air Transport that was in Article 18(a). Issues regarding aircrew (including cabin staff) are covered in separate legislation under 'The Civil Aviation (Working Time) Regulation 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 756)

The WTR 1998 Part 2 - Rights and Obligations Concerning Working Time - provide for a maximum 48 hours working for each seven days; this limit may be averaged over a 17-week referenced period.

The working time regulations allow an individual to opt out of the maximum 48-hour provision. However, this opt-out still requires the employer to comply with the provisions of Article 6(1) for the length of night work, Article 10(1) for daily rest periods, Article 11(1) for weekly rest periods, and Article 12(1) for rest breaks, all of which still apply. These requirements apply equally to contract staff as well as permanent staff within an organisation.

In addition, in the case of contracted staff where the period of a contract is less than the 17-week reference period, under Article 4(4) the reference period for the 48-hour maximum is the contract period.

It is anticipated that each EU member state will have in place corresponding legislation with the same provisions.

In the above case, the reporter's concerns were raised directly with the Quality Manager of the company concerned, who undertook to address the issue with the relevant line manager.

A final point; notwithstanding the provisions of the WTR, the consequences of a maintenance related error can have serious safety implications. The risk of such an error should be assessed and appropriately mitigated within a company's Safety Management System.

MOBILE TELEPHONE USE ON THE RAMP

Report Text: I was on my way back to the engineering office from an Aircraft Stand. A captain on a company aircraft parked on a stand some distance away called me so I ducked into the baggage handling area to take the telephone call. The captain informed me he had just arrived at the aircraft and the battery had been left on with the battery voltage down to less than 8 volts. The captain then told me that when he had connected external power the battery voltage had shot up then to 28V; he enquired if maintenance checks were required.

Immediately realising the potential hazard of an overheating battery situation, I immediately started off at a brisk walk towards Stand X, while instructing the captain to turn off the battery; the call lasted no more than 90 seconds. As I terminated the call another pilot asked me to open the exit door into the terminal for him, which I did, then proceeded towards Stand X. I then called the line office (which is situated next to Stand X) and instructed a fellow engineer to get to the aircraft on Stand X to turn off the power, get the battery offline and make the aircraft safe. That call lasted no more than 20 seconds.

As I was then making my way to the aircraft to ensure it was safe I was pulled over by an Operations Officer who wanted to give me 3 points against my airside pass for using the phone on the ramp. I pointed out that I was trying to resolve a possible emergency situation with a potential overheating battery and the Ops Officer took my reaction as me 'being shirty'. He then followed me around hassling my colleagues and me whilst we were in the middle of replacing the aircraft's main battery (a safety critical task) which just added to stress levels.

Lessons Learned: Airfield Ops staff should be subject to regular Human Factors training. I fully understand we are not allowed to use a mobile phone on the apron but we have no other way to contact company headquarters or offices when we are on the apron. Maybe this ruling should be relaxed somewhat. We as engineers learn the effects of stress on HF.

I also understand the safeguards that exist within aircraft systems which prevent overheating batteries but our HF training teaches us that if we see a potentially hazardous situation forming it is our duty to stop it as quickly as possible in order that the 'Swiss cheese holes' never get the chance to line up. Aircraft safety systems are there as a backup.

CHIRP Comment: If a maintenance operation requires regular two-way contact with/between personnel on the ramp area, arrangements should be made with the airport operator for proper two-way radio provision or designated safe areas where mobile telephones may be used. Notwithstanding the above, the current guidance for the use of mobile telephones/PEDs airside at UK airports offers very little practical information to guide individuals or companies in their use and would benefit from clarification.

The Eurocontrol SKYbrary service recently issued information on managing risks during refuelling and defuelling, based on the available advice including CAA CAP 748 - Aircraft Fuelling and Fuel Installation

Management. The information suggests that fuel vapour ignition caused by PED sparking is extremely remote under normal circumstances, but highlights that the possibility still exists. Airport operators are recommended to prohibit the use of PEDs in the vicinity of refuelling operations. See www.skybrary.aero.

MORE ON CAT A LICENCE STANDARDS

Report Text: After reading CHIRP 'Limited and simple authorisation' I was going to bin the 'mag'. However, this could easily be referring to the company I work for - we have a similar set-up with similar problems i.e. 'A' licensed technicians simply do not always work as intended. Daily check items get certified as completed yet they are not always done! Some of these guys had no intention or the aptitude to be certifiers.

CHIRP is OK to 'get things off your chest' but what is needed is action - not 'glossed over, sweep-under-the-carpet' words.

Better than nothing but in reality very limited effect.

CHIRP Comment: The responsibility for checks on the competence of individual Cat A licence holders is both that of company management and Cat B licence holders. The standards for accomplishing these checks must be published in company Quality procedures and these must reflect the requirements of Part 145.A.30 (e) Personnel Requirements.

In AMC145.A.30 (e), Para 1 outlines the use of 'on-the-job evaluation' to determine an individual's suitability, whilst Para 2b clarifies the Cat A mechanics responsibilities for accomplishing the tasks scoped in AMC145.A.30 (g). In addition, AMC145.A.30 (e) Para 3d defines the responsibilities of supervision for ensuring that maintenance is carried out to the required standards.

If it is apparent that an individual is not performing a task to an acceptable standard, it is the responsibility of a licence holder to report the matter to their line manager. This may result in the individual receiving further training and closer supervisory support to improve their level of competence, or it is possible that the Quality Department in conjunction with the line manager will determine that an individual does not possess the required knowledge/skills to merit continuing to hold a company issued authorisation.

In cases where, for justifiable reasons, an individual elects to report a competence issue through this Programme rather than directly to a company, the matter is not 'swept under the carpet'. If the reporter consents, the matter is either raised with the relevant organisation directly at an appropriate management level or is represented to the CAA on behalf of the reporter. In the case quoted in this report the Quality Manager was apprised of the reporter's concerns.

As many reporters appreciate, it is essential to maintain the integrity of a confidential reporting system. Therefore, although we are invariably aware of specific details associated with a report, it is not appropriate to publish individual cases in an open forum. Reports are published in FEEDBACK in order to raise awareness or provide information that might be helpful in the resolution of a similar situation.

CAA (SRG) AIRCOMS

The following CAA (SRG) ATS Airworthiness Communications (AIRCOMs) have been issued since 2 February 2010

2010/02

Withdrawal of Declaration of Flight Manual Standard (DFMS) Service

2010/03

Amendment to the Air Navigation Order 2009

CAA (SRG) AIRCOMS are published on the CAA website (www.caa.co.uk). Any queries can be addressed to Airworthiness Strategy and Policy Department (requirements@caa.co.uk)

If you wish to contact the CAA Flight Operations Inspectorate or to report directly 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?

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:

Civil Aviation Authority
Personnel Licensing Department
Licensing Operations
Aviation House
Gatwick Airport South
West Sussex RH6 0YR
Fax: 01293 573996

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 following relevant department (**please remember to include your licence number**):

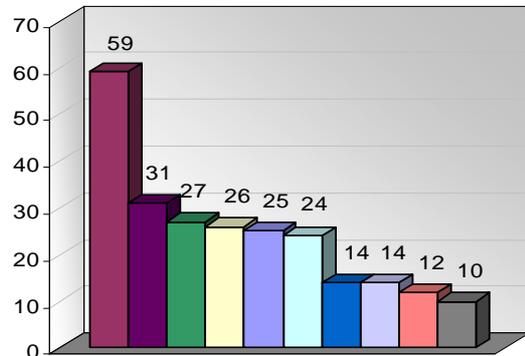
Flight Crew fclweb@caa.co.uk
ATCO/FISO ats.licensing@caa.co.uk
Maintenance Engineer eldweb@caa.co.uk

Registered in England No: 3253764

Registered Charity: 1058262

FLIGHT CREW REPORTS

Most Frequent Flight Crew Issues Received: 12 Months to March 2010



- Company Policies**
(Absence, Operational, Safety Reporting)
- Duty**
(Rosters/Rostering, Rest, Length, Crewing, Disruption)
- Communications - External**
(ATC, Regulators/Government)
- Airports**
(Runways, Bird Control, Infrastructure)
- Security**
(Ground)
- Communications - Internal**
(Team/Shift/Watch, Managers)
- Relationship Management**
(Planning, Managers)
- Pressure**
(Commercial, from Management/Supervision, Time)
- Handling/Operation**
(Aircraft Handling by Crew, Operation of Equipment)
- Air Traffic Management**
(Use by Others, Adequacy, Use by Reporter)

EMERGENCY DESCENT PROCEDURES

Report Text: Regarding 'Emergency Descent procedures in the UK' as published in AIC Pink 052/2009 dated 16 July 2009, the CAA's recommendation raises a number of issues:

- The Emergency Descent procedure may well require subtle pilot modification in the UK to that used in the rest of the world and will be potentially different to the rest of the world. (i.e. Non ICAO compliant) Difficult enough for a UK pilot to remember, but would a non UK pilot be likely to remember?
- For aircraft exiting/entering the NAT MNPS, the crew will need to mentally "switch" and follow a different procedure.
- In the major UK ATSU's the ATC radar filtering system requires A7700 to be set by the flight crew to break through the NATS filtering system. In practice the aircraft could be thousands of feet below the expected Flight Level/Altitude before the transponder is changed. I am aware that setting the Emergency transponder code is normally a "memory item", but in the simulator it is often overlooked or sometimes mis-set. The sweep-up using the QRH takes time; in one manufacturer's QRH, the

transponder is the sixth action item (of the Emergency Descent drill), but there are 150 words to read before you come to it!

I am not sure whether CAA or NATS has really helped us trainers/airlines with this answer; I would be grateful if you could point out this "Catch 22". I also wonder which worldwide aircraft manufacturers and airline pilots were consulted by the CAA before this AIC was promulgated.

Isn't it a pity that the UK doesn't comply with the rest of the world?

CHIRP Comment: The procedure detailed in AIC P052/2009 was the outcome of discussions between the CAA and NATS; it is understood that several UK operators were consulted in this process.

The procedure was not recommended by CHIRP, as has been presumed by some agencies. CHIRP's role was to request clarification of the correct procedure following reports of differences in flight crew training. As this comment notes, the new procedure does give rise to some issues that merit consideration.

The AIC does not mandate the new procedure but recommends that "if able, pilots should remain on the assigned route or track whilst carrying out the emergency descent." The recommendation is based on a NATS risk assessment; however, the AIC notes that "it is ultimately the pilot's responsibility to take the action most appropriate in the circumstances." The AIC also states that "The information.... is only to be used in conjunction with any applicable Standard Operating Procedures or Aircraft Flight Manuals."

In relation to the reporter's comments regarding the selection of Code 7700, the AIC notes that from an ATC perspective the selection of the Emergency Code is the most important action as it renders the aircraft visible to all adjacent ATC sectors, whereas flight crew SOPs may prioritise other vital actions.

Two further points are worth noting. The first is that the AIC requires other pilots hearing an emergency broadcast to maintain radio silence, listen for further instructions and maintain a good look out, whereas the ICAO procedure requires other aircraft to leave the vicinity.

The second point is that there will be some occasions, particularly during arrivals/departures, when the aircraft altitude will be such that even a rapid loss of cabin pressurisation would not require the very high rates of descent generated by a full emergency descent procedure in order to descend to 10,000ft in the required time. The CAA has acknowledged that the current training pre-conditions crews to carry out the full procedure; work is in progress to review this aspect.

The CAA is also seeking to persuade Eurocontrol to adopt the UK procedure, which is similar to that already adopted in Germany.

NUISANCE TCAS ADVISORIES

Report Text: Inbound to LHR after long-haul trans-Atlantic flight. About 10 miles SW of OCK cleared direct to OCK to enter hold at FL100. We observed a climbing aircraft on TCAS at 12 o'clock, about 2,000'

below and shortly thereafter received a TCAS advisory "Traffic, Traffic". The traffic had a high rate of climb (ROC), eventually became proximate traffic as ROC reduced and levelled 1,000' below. The PF was ready to react to a TCAS Resolution Advisory if it had triggered.

About 3 miles from OCK received another TCAS "Traffic, Traffic" advisory, against traffic 12 o'clock with a high ROC 3,600' below; the traffic again levelled 1,000' below with no further problems.

I advised ATC that two such events in quick succession were somewhat worrying. I was aware that there was not much the controller could do about it, but my short conversation was more designed to hint to the pilots of the other traffic that they should have a little more consideration with regard to their ROCs.

Lessons Learned: A high ROC close to a cleared altitude has great potential for triggering TCAS alerts. Time and again I read advice about paying close attention to managing climbs and descents in busy TMAs, particularly ROC/ROD. I feel that the second event described above had to be a very high ROC to trigger a TCAS alert on an aircraft 3600' above. Please control ROC/ROD when approaching cleared levels to avoid unnecessary TCAS activity.

If the aircraft were relying on their automation to resolve the situation, I feel that one day the operator will be caught out if it doesn't work. The result would probably be a level-bust and/or a TCAS RA.

CHIRP Comment: The potential for high vertical rates to trigger a TCAS advisory is a well known problem as avid readers of ICAO PAN-OPS Volume 1, Section 3, Part 3, Chapter 3, Attachment B will be aware.

The CAA has provided similar guidance to operators on this topic in CAP789 - Requirements and Guidance Material for Operators; published in March 2010 [Chapter 12 - Flight Procedures, Para. 23 refers]. Para 23 includes the following:

Modern aircraft and their flight guidance systems are designed to fly specific flight profiles that provide fuel-efficient and time-efficient flight paths. An integral element of these designs commands the aircraft to quickly climb to more efficient operating altitudes and then remain at these altitudes until fuel-efficient idle thrust descents can be achieved....

....The design of these flight guidance systems can result in vertical speeds in excess of 3,000 ft/min until the aircraft is within 500 ft of the ATC-assigned altitude.

To reduce the likelihood of a high vertical rate generated RA the CAP states (Para.23.8.2)

Amongst the procedures that might be considered (by operators), the following should be reviewed:

- Limiting the vertical speed to 1,500 ft/min when within 1,000 ft of the aircraft's assigned altitude, particularly in airspace with a high traffic density.
- Using only moderate values of vertical speed when climbing or descending through small altitude changes.
- Avoiding the use of zoom climbs and high rates of descent within airspace with a high traffic density.

However, Para. 23.8.5 states:

When reviewing the procedures in paragraph 23.8.2, operators should ensure that any change in procedures does not result in an increased risk of altitude busts. These may occur due to the limitations of the autopilot mode being changed when the autopilot is in the altitude-capture mode, such that the assigned altitude capture function is lost.

Whilst managing rates of climb/descent in the vicinity of an assigned altitude/level will reduce the number of nuisance TCAS advisories, it is important this is achieved through a company SOP to mitigate the risk of a level bust. Several operators provide crews with such an option.

MORE ON LIGHTNING ENCOUNTERS (FB93)

(1)

Report Text: I have seen my fair share of thunderstorms from both the outside and inside of which a tropical giant was the most alarming but, as it turned out, the least damaging.

My aircraft has been struck twice by lightning in conditions where I did not expect it. Both occasions were in descent, one in Norway during the winter and one in the UK in late summer. Both events involved entry into what appeared to be ordinary Cumulus with tops below 12,000ft and clear skies above. Very shortly after entry it was apparent that the cloud was very thick and turbulent, both lightning strikes occurred fairly close to the top. The weather radar did not provide any of the classic indications of the threat (i.e. iso echo contour). Fortunately damage was minimal in both cases.

Lessons Learned: Not all lightning occurs in 'textbook' conditions. Winter Cumulus, possibly fed by a warm sea, can hold unexpected surprises!

(2)

Report Text: In response to the report that you published in the last issue (Lightning Encounters - Page 10), I have a different view regarding weather avoidance, which I believe is even more safety minded.

The retired pilot explained how he always went to great lengths to avoid any return on his radar screen. I do not agree that this is the safest course of action. Consider the effect on the workload for air traffic control; if all of us request vectors around smudges on our radar screen then pretty soon ATC is going to be seriously over-stretched - as if our UK airspace is not busy enough already. The risk is that in the event of an emergency ATC could be overwhelmed, even if only temporarily.

Against that is the risk of being struck by lightning from a small cell. Very unlikely to be at all serious, and we're not going to fall out of the sky.

It goes without saying that we should treat any Cb activity at cruise altitudes with the respect they deserve. We should avoid focussed red returns, even from small systems in the TMA. But cumulus cloud and other low altitude weather activity at the lower levels is not dangerous.

If we all demand avoidance from the green and yellow radar smudges then we should not kid ourselves that we are avoiding all risk - we aren't. Nothing is risk free, but if a few passenger drinks are spilt from time to time then it's a price worth paying to preserve ATC capacity in our very busy airspace.

(3)

Report Text: I fully agree with the report 'Lightning Encounters' in the last issue.

However, I take issue with the CHIRP comment, "UK controllers almost exclusively use processed radar information which suppresses all weather returns", which does CHIRP a disservice by making it. This is a standard that ought to be changed!

CHIRP should be leading the way to get this potentially catastrophic data used more by UK ATC. Amsterdam ATC in particular deserve praise for their use of radar weather returns for vectoring aircraft.

CHIRP Comment: As these three reports show, individual perceptions of the threat posed by thunderstorms vary.

On the specific issue of UK ATC, the comment in the last issue was a statement of fact and not an argument in favour of the use of processed radar. Weather information is available to ATCO's on an 'as required' basis but is not displayed at each controller's position. Prior to the introduction of processed radar, NATS experience was that a majority of pilots preferred to take their own avoiding action, based on their weather radar displays, as opposed to accepting radar vectors/re-routing from ATC.

Notwithstanding this, if you should require assistance with assessing/ avoiding adverse weather, make a request to ATC.

SNOWTAMS ON THE AIS WEBSITE

Report Text: This report concerns the retrieval of SNOWTAM data concurrently with NOTAM information from the NATS AIS website.

The CAA advises against the use of contaminated runways and this is mirrored in Part B of my company's Operations Manual and other parts of our manuals. They state "Whenever possible, landing on contaminated runways must be avoided". Therefore, when briefing prior to flight I have to be very aware of the runway state and any contamination present at both the Destination and Alternate Aerodromes.

When we report for duty we either get presented with the NOTAMS by our Operations department or they get printed off by the Captain or First Officer. All use the NOTAM tab on the home page of the NATS website to access an Aerodrome, Route or Narrow Route brief. When any of the three is selected, the user has the option to include SNOWTAM information in the briefing content. (Why on earth anybody would wish to exclude SNOWTAM information is totally beyond me. It should be automatically included.)

The results start with a header that includes data about the search criteria. However the header fails to indicate whether the user requested to include SNOWTAMS in

the results. Thus, when presented with the NOTAMS, I have no way of checking if the searcher included the SNOWTAM option. This has cropped up myriad times this season. It's a fault of the website rather than the user and it should be rectified.

(The header does sometimes quote the inclusion of 'SNOWTAM' at the top but I think it only does when the search engine actually finds a SNOWTAM at one of the aerodromes inputted by the user. This is a bit pointless really as one would hope the reader might recognise a SNOWTAM when they see one!)

Main point 1: The results should always show if SNOWTAM (or ASHTAM /BIRDTAM) data was requested irrespective of whether any actually exist.

Main point 2: Why on earth is the user even given the option to exclude SNOWTAM data?

Main point 3: The website should be rectified.

CHIRP Comment: After discussion by the Air Transport Advisory Board, the reporters' comments were forwarded to the manager of the AIS website; subsequently the manager advised that the change proposed was an excellent suggestion and confirmed that a change request had been submitted to include SNOWTAMs by default.

As many pilots will be aware, the extended periods of severe weather in December and January led to a number of operational difficulties associated with winter operations being reported.

In response to these, the CAA has elected to carry out a survey of MORs submitted during the relevant periods and to conduct a review with industry representatives of what lessons might be learned to mitigate similar difficulties in future periods of adverse weather. Reports submitted to this programme on the topic have been forwarded to the CAA for consideration in the review.

900-HOUR LIMIT

Report Text: I was wondering if you could help me out with a Flight Time Limitation (FTL) question.

The 900 flying hour limitation as per FTL is being interpreted differently at this company to any other airline that I have worked for.

Can you confirm, is this limit a 12 month calendar limit or a rolling 365 days?

CHIRP Comment: The CAP 371 Guidelines state that the limit of 900 hours applies for a "period of 12 months, expiring at the end of the previous month".

However, as we have pointed out previously, the definitive document is not CAP 371 but your company's Approved FTL scheme. If your company has negotiated a variation to CAP 371, it will be published in your company's Approved FTL scheme.

BREATHALYSER USE

Report Text: I use a high quality breathalyser to ensure next day legality for the 20mg limit. I have found that at least one brand of ordinary toothpaste raises the residual mg reading by 20 -60 mg. How many Pilots would think to declare that they had recently cleaned

their teeth in a spot breath test, as there is no warning on the toothpaste tube?

CHIRP Comment: Moderation of alcohol intake in the 24-hour period prior to a flight is essential and regular use of a breathalyser to ensure pre-duty legality of alcohol level is not condoned; EU-OPS/JAR-OPS 3 (1/3.085) requires an 8-hour minimum 'bottle to throttle' period.

Notwithstanding this, if a breathalyser is used for additional reassurance prior to commencing a duty period, it is worth remembering that the literature suggests that if alcohol, toothpaste or mouthwash products have been consumed or used, you should allow a period of at least 15 minutes to elapse before performing a test

The effect described by the reporter is highlighted in the instructions for the use of many breathalyser types, in the same way that residual alcohol in the mouth will result in an elevated reading.

Also, remember that some effects of alcohol, such as those affecting the balance organs in the inner ear, can last for many hours after alcohol becomes immeasurable in the breath or the bloodstream.

TRANSITION ALTITUDES - A COMMENT FROM FB 93

Report Text: Interested in the latest observations in CHIRP about level busts and the differing TAs

AIP ENR 1-7-2 2008 states

"Within controlled airspace.... When cleared for climb to a flight level vertical position will be expressed in terms of a flight level"

I think the earlier version may have also said something along the lines of "No 1 Altimeter should be set to 1013 when cleared to a flight level"

Our Ops Manual requires us to set 1013mb on no1 altimeter when cleared to a flight level (i.e. not to wait until passing whatever TA is in that area).

I may be dense (sorry, no pun intended) but doesn't this procedure solve the problem?

CHIRP Comment: The standard operating procedure described by the reporter is one of those recommended for use by operators in CAP789 - Requirements and Guidance Material for Operators, Chapter 12, Para. 5; however, the procedure does not cover the departure case where the Standard Instrument Departure is to a Flight Level, as for example at BHX.

SECURITY REPORTS

At a recent meeting, a senior airline manager asserted that airport security was not a safety issue that he recognised on the basis that very few company reports had been received on the topic in spite of an invitation by senior management for incidents to be submitted openly.

As we have pointed out previously, although the number of security related reports has reduced, we still receive examples such as the following:

RAMP ACCESS DENIED

Report Text: Checked in this morning to operate a positioning flight and called company operations to find out where the aircraft was parked and how we were to access it. I was informed that the aircraft was on a remote stand and if we left our office we would find a secure door on the left just before Gate # which would give us access to the ramp below the building where a bus would be waiting to take us to the aircraft.

I located the door which had the standard card reader access and swiped my card. The reader responded "card valid" but before I could step through the door with my First Officer and single crewmember we were accosted by an Airport Security officer who informed us that "we were not allowed to go through that door".

When I asked why, I was informed that I was not entitled to go through any door on the airport and that my Airport swipe pass was solely to allow access through the Terminal Security Check Point (our crew check-in now being airside in the Terminal).

I inquired how I was meant carry out a walk-round whereupon I was informed that I should have a ground staff member escort me at all times on the ramp! I informed the security officer that in more than 15 years of operating I had never heard anything so ridiculous and swiped myself on and off the ramp all the time. I was informed that this was incorrect and had always been so. I asked to speak to a supervisor pointing out that an aircraft was now being delayed by their obstinacy.

When the supervisor arrived she confirmed everything that the officer had told me but seemed a little unsure noting that my security pass allowed access to the ramp area. She contacted the Airport Authority Service Manager who also backed up all that the security staff had told me saying that it was a DfT directive.

The only way we were allowed through the door was if we were escorted by one of our ground staff.

My Pass has numbers on the front which gives me access to:

1. Internal area(s) of the restricted zone (departure lounges, piers and the interior of other buildings)
2. Baggage reclaim halls
3. Ramp
4. Aircraft and their footprints.

The whole of this altercation took the best part of half an hour and left me angry and stressed to say the least.

Lessons Learned: There are no lessons to be learned from this other than that our airport security is in total disarray.

If I am allowed in these areas then it follows that I must be allowed to transit between these areas but this fact seems to have been lost in translation somewhere.

CHIRP Comment: Clarification on the directive related to ramp access is being sought.

CREW BAG SEARCHES

(1)

Report Text: For some time it has become clear that the staff at BBB are being targeted for excessive and overly intrusive security checks.

Having flown from BBB as a passenger it is quite clear that the checking of passengers is not nearly as frequent or intrusive.

With this in mind I have been keeping records of the security checks on the crew under my control; the hand search rate of crew bags is around 70%.

Until a recent incident I had blamed this on job protection on the part of the security operatives but now I have to adjust my opinion.

On this particular day I am being patted down having set the magnetic arch off. The guy doing the search is acting in a professional way and I remark that he seems to be being checked by his management; by his attitude to this remark it is clear that he is unhappy, I then ask if I should enquire as to why flight crew/staff are targeted by the BBB security agents.

The reaction to my comments was greeted with a discreet request from both the operatives on duty in a very positive way, one remarking that "they were sick of being forced to target staff".

When challenged, the management checkers trotted out the company line that 25% of baggage had to be hand searched and that was about the rate that staff were searched. He hotly contested that flight crew/staff are targeted for extra searches and got very defensive when I produced my note book that logged a bag search rate for my crews of about 75%.

I had some time to make my point as 100% of the crew on this flight had bags searched, a fact that when raised resulted in some discomfort from the manager.

Lessons Learned: The front line security operatives are under a lot of pressure from the management and are forced to conduct more searches on flight crew/staff than they would on passengers. As such I now give the front line operatives a lot more respect due to the pressure that they are working under.

The only conclusion that I can draw is that the airport authority management are using the staff bag search to bring the total bag search numbers up to the required 25%. This has the advantage of reducing the very public and politically sensitive waiting time for passengers. The extra time that passengers then have in the duty free shopping area might also be a factor in this policy.

However the bottom line is that a lot of staff are now of the opinion that the airport authority is cooking the bag search numbers and that the policy of excessive searching of staff, who to get an airside pass have had security checks done, rather than conducting the searches of the public who only have to buy a ticket to get airside, is a real security issue.

From a flight safety point of view I now find that the anger, delay and distraction resulting from excessive security searches is the most likely reason for any mistakes made by the flight crew or ground engineers.

(2)

Report Text: In the morning six of us went with hand luggage through security. All of our bags were thoroughly searched which caused a delay. A security gentleman went through my bag quite boldly. He took out everything leaving most private belongings such as undergarments and feminine hygiene items in the open for everyone to see. There were a lot of crews present to observe these private items. Should bags not be searched in a more discrete manner?!

Lessons Learned: Couldn't security search suitcases behind a screen in a more private setting and, if not, could they handle our belongings more respectfully?

(3)

Report Text: On walking through our dedicated security channel, I went to collect my luggage from the end of the scanner. On doing so, I heard a security operative ask the female cabin crew member ahead of me if they could do a random search on her bag. The crew member batted her eyelids a little and said, "Please not me today, please" etc etc. I was surprised at the fact the security operative let her continue without a search.

Am I to bat my eyelids in future to avoid being searched? Furthermore, how is this adding to security levels? Surely random searches should be just that. What if that one cabin crew member had been carrying something she shouldn't have?

I have travelled through the passenger channels (in uniform) on a number of occasions and the security staff employed there (*Editor: Different company*) are much more professional, pro-active and reasonable. One of them even allowed me to take a drink from a bottle of lucozade I had forgotten about before disposing of it.

I am CERTAIN that the passenger channel staff would lead to more relaxed flight and cabin crew, as they are obviously better trained in how to treat people with respect!!

CHIRP Comment: The issues raised in these three reports have been referred to the relevant Head of Airport Security.

CAA (SRG) FODCOMS

The following CAA (SRG) FODCOMS have been issued since **2 February 2010**

04/2010

Introduction of the CAA's 'EASA - Air Operations' Webpage

05/2010

Passenger Safety Briefings

06/2010

Cabin Crew Procedures Following Deployment of Oxygen Masks

07/2010

Mandatory Occurrence Reporting - CAA Guidance Material

08/2010

Publication of CAP 789 Requirements and Guidance Material for Operators

09/2010

Standard Instrument Departure (SID) and Standard Arrival (STAR) Climb and Descent Procedures and Phraseology

CAA (SRG) Flight Operations Department Communications are published on the CAA website - www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?categoryid=33 and click on the link 'Search for a CAA Publication'

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Confidential Reports can be submitted via our website www.chirp.co.uk

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CHIRP

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Name: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your personal details are required only to enable us to contact you for further details about any part of your report. Please do not submit anonymous reports. 2. On closing, this Report Form will be returned to you. NO RECORD OF YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS WILL BE KEPT 3. CHIRP is a reporting programme for safety-related issues. We regret we are unable to accept reports that relate to industrial relations issues.
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PLEASE COMPLETE RELEVANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE EVENT/SITUATION

YOURSELF		THE EVENT/SITUATION			
TOTAL EXPERIENCE	YRS	DATE		WEATHER:	
EXPERIENCE PRESENT UNIT	YRS	LOCAL TIME		VMC	<input type="checkbox"/> IMC <input type="checkbox"/>
VALIDATED PRESENT POSITION	YRS	LOCATION OF AIRCRAFT		RAIN	<input type="checkbox"/> FOG <input type="checkbox"/>
ACTING AS INSTRUCTOR	<input type="checkbox"/>	NEAREST REPORTING POINT		ICE	<input type="checkbox"/> SNOW <input type="checkbox"/>
UNDER TRAINING	<input type="checkbox"/>	DAY <input type="checkbox"/> NIGHT <input type="checkbox"/>		OTHER:	
UNIT/SERVICE		FLIGHT PHASE		1ST AIRCRAFT	2ND AIRCRAFT
NATS <input type="checkbox"/> NON- NATS <input type="checkbox"/>		TAXI <input type="checkbox"/> TAKE-OFF <input type="checkbox"/>		TYPE/SERIES	TYPE/SERIES
ATC SERVICE(S) BEING PROVIDED		CLIMB <input type="checkbox"/> CRUISE <input type="checkbox"/>		OPERATOR	OPERATOR
TYPE(S) OF AIRSPACE		DESCENT <input type="checkbox"/> APPROACH <input type="checkbox"/>		PAX <input type="checkbox"/> FREIGHT <input type="checkbox"/>	PAX <input type="checkbox"/> FREIGHT <input type="checkbox"/>
TYPE OF RADAR		LANDING <input type="checkbox"/> GO AROUND <input type="checkbox"/>		OTHER:	OTHER:
SHIFT WORKED		OTHER:		IFR <input type="checkbox"/> VFR <input type="checkbox"/>	IFR <input type="checkbox"/> VFR <input type="checkbox"/>
HOURS ON DUTY	HRS			OTHER:	OTHER:
LOCATION		My MAIN POINTS ARE:			
NAME OF UNIT/AIRFIELD:		A:			
REPORT TOPIC		B:			
MY REPORT RELATES TO:		C:			

DESCRIPTION OF EVENT - PHOTOGRAPHS, DIAGRAMS ON A CD ARE WELCOME:

Your narrative will be reviewed by a member of the **CHIRP** staff who will remove all information such as dates/locations/names that might identify you. Bear in mind the following topics when preparing your narrative:

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continue on a separate piece of paper, if necessary

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Address: <input style="width:90%;" type="text"/>	
Post Code <input style="width:25%;" type="text"/> Tel: <input style="width:60%;" type="text"/>	
e-mail: <input style="width:60%;" type="text"/> <input style="width:5%; text-align: center; font-size: 0.8em;"/> ▲ Indicates Mandatory Fields	

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PLEASE COMPLETE RELEVANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE EVENT/SITUATION

YOURSELF - CREW POSITION				THE FLIGHT/EVENT			
CAPTAIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	FIRST OFFICER	<input type="checkbox"/>	DATE OF OCCURRENCE		TIME	(LOCAL/GMT)
PILOT FLYING	<input type="checkbox"/>	PILOT NOT FLYING	<input type="checkbox"/>	LOCATION		HEIGHT/ALT/FL	
FLIGHT ENGINEER	<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER CREW MEMBER	<input type="checkbox"/>	TYPE OF ATC SERVICE		DAY	<input type="checkbox"/> NIGHT <input type="checkbox"/>
THE AIRCRAFT		TYPE OF FLIGHT		TYPE OF OPERATION			
TYPE/SERIES		IFR	<input type="checkbox"/> VFR <input type="checkbox"/>	PASSENGER	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING	<input type="checkbox"/>
NUMBER OF CREW		OTHER:	<input type="checkbox"/>	FREIGHT	<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER:	
EXPERIENCE/QUALIFICATION		WEATHER		FLIGHT PHASE			
TOTAL HOURS	HRS	VMC	<input type="checkbox"/> IMC <input type="checkbox"/>	TAXI	<input type="checkbox"/>	TAKE-OFF	<input type="checkbox"/>
HOURS ON TYPE	HRS	RAIN	<input type="checkbox"/> FOG <input type="checkbox"/>	CLIMB	<input type="checkbox"/>	CRUISE	<input type="checkbox"/>
TRG CAPT	<input type="checkbox"/>	ICE	<input type="checkbox"/> SNOW <input type="checkbox"/>	DESCENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	APPROACH	<input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER QUALIFICATIONS:		OTHER:		LANDING	<input type="checkbox"/>	GO AROUND	<input type="checkbox"/>
THE COMPANY				MY MAIN POINTS ARE:			
NAME OF COMPANY:				A:			
REPORT TOPIC				B:			
MY REPORT RELATES TO:				C:			

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