

CHIRP CC FEEDBACK

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EDITORIAL

EXCESS CABIN BAGGAGE

During 2009 and 2010 this Programme received numerous reports involving several UK operators from which it was apparent that adequate checks were not in place to control the amount of cabin baggage being brought onboard by passengers. As a result cabin crew were faced with the difficult task of dealing with excess cabin baggage, at a time when they were often under pressure to achieve an on-time departure.

In some instances it was simply a case that the available overhead/onboard stowages were insufficient to accommodate the amount of cabin baggage with a full passenger complement. In other instances it was route/destination specific or the result of passengers interlining/transferring from long-haul international flights onto smaller aircraft.

In response to the reported concerns the CAA conducted a series of airport ramp inspections involving eight operators. These identified issues of non-compliance and inconsistency with regard to operators' procedures for cabin baggage, some of which compromised safety due to commercial pressure.

In June 2011 the CAA issued Safety Notice SN 2011/05 to all UK AOC Holders reminding them of their responsibilities and the Regulations pertaining to baggage. The Notice detailed the safety issues identified and the actions to be taken to ensure that only such hand baggage is taken into the aircraft that can be adequately and securely stowed. Specifically, the Notice required that items of hand baggage must not be stowed in toilets or other non-approved stowages and items must not be carried, unrestrained, on the flight deck.

The trend in reporting more recently indicates that some UK operators appear to have revised their procedures to control cabin baggage more effectively. However, it would appear that in other cases the problem is not being adequately managed. The following report is typical of a number received in the recent past:

Report Text: During boarding I became aware that excess baggage was being brought on by passengers. This is an ongoing issue at my company and there is no monitoring of baggage until at the aircraft door. Baggage frames are displayed all over the terminal but are never used. Ground staff do not challenge passengers for fear of confrontation.

At the boarding door it is often chaotic with mandatory checking of boarding cards and pressure to depart on

time. The company keep telling us we must not lift bags, but passengers see this as a lack of service rather than a safety issue, and expect us to lift any manner of things into the overhead lockers. We have no weight restriction for cabin bags which is taken advantage of. We simply do not have enough space onboard for everyone to bring the permitted amount of bags to start with. A mention about baggage on this occasion, and in general, brings a shrugged shoulder response from ground staff as if it is not their problem. I advised ground staff on this particular flight and they were not interested.

At this airport another airline had ground staff at the entrance to security policing excess baggage and our company really should be doing the same. It is the knowledge that the company never cares how much or how heavy people's bags are that encourages them to bring more and more. The company really should be taking more immediate action regarding this issue.

CHIRP Comment: Problems such as those described in this report and others should be readily apparent to senior managers from audits conducted as part of an operator's Safety Management System (SMS). Thus it is difficult to conclude other than either the operator's SMS is not effective or the problem has been placed in the 'too difficult drawer'. Neither is acceptable given the CAA findings in 2011.

If you experience difficulty with excess cabin baggage, make sure that the aircraft commander and the senior cabin crew member are aware and a company report is submitted. If not acted upon submit a CHIRP report.

International Federation of Airworthiness

WHITTLE SAFETY AWARD

The Trust has received the International Federation of Airworthiness Whittle Safety Award for its management of the aviation programmes.

The citation reads:

To Peter Tait, Chief Executive of the UK Confidential Human [Factors] Incident Reporting Programme (CHIRP) and his team, Mick Skinner (Deputy Director Engineering) and Kirsty Arnold (Cabin Crew Programme Manager and Administration Manager)

"In recognition of their contribution to aviation safety, through the development of a confidential reporting programme on human performance issues and concerns. An addition to formal reporting systems within the United Kingdom, the programme covers all aviation related sectors and disciplines."

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PRE-FLIGHT SAFETY QUESTIONS

Report Text: I just wanted to query the procedures that have recently been introduced by my airline regarding pre-flight safety briefings and questions on aircraft safety (emergency drills, safety equipment location and usage, and first aid).

CAP 789 Chapter 32 states; 'Cabin crew should be given a safety briefing prior to the commencement of any flight and, in a series of consecutive flights, after each full rest period. Consideration should be given to the following: c) All cabin crew present should be required to answer satisfactorily at least one question on aircraft safety (emergency drills, safety equipment location and usage) or one on first aid and also; f) The action to be taken by the senior cabin crew if it becomes apparent that any person displays inadequate knowledge of safety-related issues'

Our safety department has just introduced a procedure where, if an instructor is operating on a flight as a crew member, they will ask the rest of the crew safety questions, despite them NOT operating as the senior crew.

My question is this, is it acceptable that the senior crew member, who is taking the responsibility for the flight, has their ability to question an operating crew member's safety knowledge taken away? (In this case by an instructor operating as a cabin crew member.)

Furthermore, can you confirm that ALL crew members must answer safety questions? So in ANY instance even the senior cabin crew must answer a safety question?

CHIRP Comment: This report was brought to the attention of the operator concerned. The pre-flight briefing procedure was discussed with the CAA (SRG); as a result the operator issued a revised safety notice which explained the changes in procedure and clarified that the SCCM will conduct the pre-flight briefing.

As regards the reporter's specific query, all operating crew are required to participate in the pre-flight briefing in accordance with the procedures promulgated in the company's Operations Manual.

HOTAC & SPLIT DUTIES

Report Text: We operated a flight that had to divert to a European destination due to visibility. Check in was at 05.25 and we landed into the diverted airport at 09.10.

We then waited on the aircraft for the passengers to be coached to us, which took around 7 hours due to bad weather and an accident on the road. We departed at 17.09 and then landed back at base at 19.23.

Crewing have put on our rosters that we had HOTAC and stayed at the hotel located at the airport which we didn't. When we queried this with them they said that it doesn't mean we had HOTAC but it has to be on there to show that we completed a split duty. Is this correct?

CHIRP Comment: A Split Duty is defined as a flying duty period (FDP) which consists of two or more sectors, separated by less than a minimum rest period. A Split Duty allows an FDP to be extended; the extension would depend on the length of the rest period.

The rest period must not include the time allowed for immediate post-flight duties and pre-flight duties. If the rest period is more than 6 consecutive hours, then suitable accommodation must be provided.

However, when the intervening rest period is 6 hours or less, hotel accommodation is not a requirement. It will suffice if a quiet and comfortable place, not open to the public, is available. Rest may also be taken in an aircraft on the ground but when it is the minimum standards of noise, temperature, light and ventilation are to be specified in the Operations Manual. Such arrangements are only permitted when the crew have adequate control of the temperature and ventilation within the aircraft, and passengers are not on board.

The use of the term HOTAC on the roster in this case was used to identify that a period of rest had been taken between the sectors, not that hotel accommodation had been available.

PROHIBITED ITEMS ONBOARD

Report Text: During the flight it was brought to the attention of the cabin crew that a passenger had a Stanley knife in their possession. After consultation with the flight crew and SCCM, a decision was made to ask the pax to hand over the knife. This was done without any incident.

Later in the flight it transpired that the flight crew had asked that the SCCM keep the knife in the cabin for the remainder of the flight, and then return it to the pax at disembarkation.

Lessons Learned: I felt that throughout the incident that the flight crew attitude was to make light of the situation. I felt uncomfortable about keeping the knife in the cabin and even more uncomfortable about returning the knife to the pax at disembarkation, as that pax may have had an onward connection.

In this instance the flight crew had initially not wanted to report the incident and only at the insistence of a cabin crew member had both the flight crew and SCCM felt compelled to do so. In terms of lessons for the future I would suggest that all prohibited items incidents are reported and that all crew are aware of, and follow the correct procedure.

CHIRP Comment: The carriage of knives, scissors and other restricted items is an airport security issue that for UK airports is regulated by the Department for Transport (TRANSEC). All incidents involving the presence of a restricted/prohibited item airside should be reported to management at the end of a duty for investigation by the airport authority.

Any knife with a sharp or pointed blade and/or a blade longer than 6cm is not permitted to be carried in hand luggage.

If a similar incident were to arise, cabin crew members should follow the company SOPs. If not covered by SOPs, the SCCM should consider all of the relevant facts and discuss with the aircraft commander the most appropriate place to stow the item, such as a lockable stowage in the cabin.

A prohibited/restricted item should not be returned to a passenger on disembarkation; it should be handed to a

dispatcher/ground agent and arrangements made for it to be returned to the passenger only when outside of the secure airside area.

PRE-FLIGHT MANUAL SAFETY BRIEFING

Report Text: My company is now operating some aircraft where a manual safety demonstration is performed due to a lack of video equipment on board.

I find it disturbing that on many flights there are only two crew performing the manual demo - one positioned at the front and the other further down the cabin. If the cabin divider is towards the front of the aircraft which can happen quite often, it means that the passengers further down are then expected to be able to watch the crew member at the front of the aircraft.

I have challenged some SCCM's and asked why they don't play the pre-recorded announcement, in order for all of the crew to stand in the cabin for the safety demo.

There also seems to be a trend of many SCCM's having the cabin lights dimmed for the manual safety demo - again, passengers seated further back from where crew are standing can hardly watch us explaining the use of belts, oxygen masks and lifejackets.

CHIRP Comment: This incident was referred to the operator concerned. CHIRP has been advised that the operator is in the process of updating the pre-recorded announcements for the aircraft in question.

EU-OPS requires an operator to conduct a passenger pre-flight safety briefing. When conducting a manual safety demonstration cabin crew need to ensure that the safety card and equipment are held in such a way to ensure that it is visible to all passengers. If it is brought to the attention of the cabin crew that a passenger or a number of passengers were unable to view the safety briefing then the briefing should be repeated either individually or for the affected cabin section(s).

In cases where there are several cabin light settings, the lighting should be set to HIGH for the safety briefing or that specified in the operator's procedures manual.

TURBULENCE ENCOUNTER

Report Text: Whilst coming to the end of a crew break in between services there were several crew in the rear galley. We could feel the aircraft begin to show signs of turbulence and the SCCM advised that we begin to secure the galley area. Without warning we experienced severe turbulence to which I have not felt the force of before.

The seat belt signs illuminated; however, we could not secure the cabin due to the force of the turbulence. The force threw me to the ceiling, hitting my head and neck, before falling to the floor. I had reached out to hold onto whatever I could, which at the time was merely the galley curtain, which I later found had come away in my hand and was lying on the floor. I fell to the floor, slipping on some carrier bags which along with some other debris was now on the floor. Having only two rear galley jump seats, the remaining crew had to wedge themselves in for safety or hold on to whatever they could. I could not attempt to reach my allocated jump seat which was further down the aircraft. The

turbulence subsided in severity but continued for some time, during which we remained either in jump seats or holding on to whatever we could.

After some time the Captain called the rear galley, which the SCCM took the call. He asked about our well-being and apologised for the experience. He commented upon the fact that the weather radar was not fully functioning and they had been relying on the aircraft in front for information on weather. It was at this time that the SSCM informed me that they had experienced a similar incident on the same aircraft the previous week.

Due to being so shaken by the experience, the crew working at the rear of the aircraft remained seated until approximately one hour before landing. The SCCM attended to several passengers who had been injured in the turbulence, including one passenger who had cut his head.

The experience has left me both physically injured and mentally upset. I can only go from what comments the pilots made but I find it very worrying that the Captain said the weather radar was not fully functioning and it makes me wonder whether or not this traumatic event could have been avoided if the aircraft's equipment was working fully.

The experience has also highlighted to us the fact that on these particular aircraft we have very little way of either holding on for safety or being able to secure ourselves in severe turbulence. There are only two small handles on each side of the galley and two jump seats, which with more than two crew working in the galley does not offer much safety. In this particular experience I am thankful that we were not in the cabin completing services, or in the galley area with hot liquids or food. The injuries sustained could have been much worse.

The aircraft after we landed was already being catered and loaded for another departure within two hours. It made me wonder further whether or not there would have been a proper inspection of the fuselage, and would the radar have been fixed for its next sector.

CHIRP Comment: Although some areas of turbulence can be predicted, encounters with moderate/severe levels of turbulence can occur with little or no warning even with an operating weather radar.

Also, the effect of turbulence can be different throughout the aircraft. If you assess the level to be a potential safety risk where you are located, discontinue any service, secure the area and return to your assigned seat as expeditiously as possible.

The level of turbulence that an aircraft structure can withstand without incurring significant damage is extremely severe and incidents involving damage are very rare. Most if not all aircraft are fitted with flight data recorders; these measure and record the effects of turbulence encounters and are available to be checked after such an encounter.

Contact Us

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