

CHIRP CC FEEDBACK

Issue No: 50

1/2014

CHIRP NEWS

As we mentioned in the last issue of Cabin Crew FEEDBACK, following an introduction to the staff here at CHIRP I would then introduce the key members of the Cabin Crew Advisory Board in this issue. We have decided to put this back to the next issue which will be distributed in mid March of next year as the Board is currently undergoing some changes.

Our current Chairman of the Cabin Crew Advisory Board Chris Hewitt, Cabin Safety Manager at easyJet has decided to step down after chairing the Board since June 2010. Chris joined the Cabin Crew Advisory Board in March 2006. His knowledge and expertise in the Cabin Crew field has been highly regarded by the other members of the Board and CHIRP staff and we are grateful to all that he has contributed to the Cabin Crew Programme. We would like to wish him well in his future endeavours.

EDITORIAL – CARRIAGE OF LITHIUM BATTERIES

Over recent months, CHIRP has seen an increase in the number of reports from cabin crew detailing the use of PED's and laptops onboard. This in turn has led onto the subject of the carriage of lithium batteries to be discussed at recent Cabin Crew Advisory Board Meetings. This is a subject that we felt would be of interest to all cabin crew.

Lithium batteries are classified as 'dangerous goods' and are sometimes involved in aircraft incidents, including fires. Often overheating, which is what eventually triggers ignition, occurs in equipment which, unknown to the person, is faulty in some way. However, various origins of overheating have been identified during investigations. There are two principal types of lithium battery - lithium metal and lithium ion.

Lithium metal batteries, sometimes referred to as "primary" lithium batteries, are non-rechargeable and are designed to be thrown away once their initial charge is used up. They are often used in small personal electronic devices. Consumer-sized batteries of these types such as AA and AAA batteries and flat/round lithium-button cells are permitted for carriage. Fires arising in lithium metal batteries may not necessarily be extinguished using the firefighting equipment currently carried on aircraft. For this reason, the maximum power rating of this type is less than for lithium ion types.

Lithium ion batteries, sometimes referred to as "secondary" lithium batteries, are rechargeable and are

normally found in laptop computers, tablets, digital cameras, camcorders, mobile phones, PDAs, and radio-controlled toys and games. These batteries will generally have a power rating below 100 watt-hours and the number of these which can be carried in baggage, either installed in equipment or as spares, is not limited. Batteries greater than 100 watt hours but not more than 160 watt hours when contained in equipment, with a maximum of two spares, may be carried with the approval of the operator. Batteries greater than 160 watt hours, such as those used to power e-bikes, are not permitted for carriage in either checked or carry-on baggage.

When installed in serviceable equipment, the risk of overheating is low for both types and providing they do not exceed the limits above they may be carried by passengers in either cabin or checked baggage. But it is important to remember that **no spare or loose lithium batteries of either type are permitted in checked baggage i.e. they must be carried in the cabin.**

The company procedures manual will contain advice on how to deal with a portable electronic device fire in the cabin. For further advice and information please refer to the ICAO Emergency Response Guidance for Aircraft Incidents Involving Dangerous Goods.

As we have commented in a recent report submitted to CHIRP and printed in the last issue of CC FEEDBACK, it should be noted that issues can arise if battery powered equipment such as a laptop is connected to an aircraft power source since such action usually has the effect of initiating a recharge of the battery supply.

Number of Reports Received: 01.09.13 – 31.12.13 = 50

Topics have included:

- Rosters and Rest between Duties
- Cabin Crew Training Variants
- Baggage Stowage
- Cabin Crew Experience Levels
- Disruptive Passengers
- Cabin Crew Briefings
- CRM Issues
- Flight Crew Controlled Rest Queries
- Use of Cabin Crew Seats
- Minimum & Maximum Cabin Temperatures
- Unservicable Cabin Equipment

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DOOR COVERAGE DURING A MEDICAL SITUATION

Report Text: During taxiing and shortly before reaching the runway a passenger pressed the call bell. I was working alone at the front of the aircraft, I made eye contact to the passenger and she mouthed her husband was ill. I was aware we were very close to take-off so quickly assessed the situation. My initial priority was to inform the Captain so that we didn't take-off and then call for assistance from the crew at the rear of the aircraft.

The passenger deteriorated and passed out; at this point one of the crew from the back collected the medical kit and oxygen. The passenger had very conflicting symptoms and we were unable to obtain much of a medical history from his wife. He was administered oxygen and did pass out but woke when I called him and was responsive. As soon as we were back on stand, the paramedics were at the door of the aircraft and took over from us.

During the whole incident we were very aware that we were unable to carry out the normal medical action plan due to the number of crew onboard and the initial need for myself to also become the communicator to ensure we didn't take-off. At one point all of the crew members were with the passenger as information was needed, so none of the doors were being covered by cabin crew during taxiing; however the Captain ensured we had disarmed both the front and back doors once we reached the stand.

Where do we stand with minimum crew if we are all involved in a medical incident during taxi and as a result aren't covering the doors?

Lessons Learned: We learnt a lot. That the symptoms you are presented with don't always have an immediate answer (we learnt on return to base later on that day that he was still in A&E having tests as they were unsure what was wrong) but even though I assumed all of the roles to begin with in the medical action plan, we should then verbally tell each other what role we are assuming as more crew arrive to help. I also learnt that it is impossible with minimum crew to man the doors on the ground during a serious medical emergency and that priority should be given to the most serious incident at the time; which was the medical issue. As the passenger was close to the front of the aircraft I wasn't concerned about the front doors but as soon as we felt it was okay, we released a crew member to cover the rear doors.

CHIRP Comment: The cabin crew handled the medical incident well and should be congratulated for their quick response in caring for the passenger. By determining that this was a genuine medical emergency, they managed to stop the aircraft from departing where the passenger's condition may have deteriorated once airborne. Risk mitigations and the chances of something untoward occurring at the same time as the medical emergency are minimal and cabin crew must prioritise their actions accordingly. When the aircraft is on the ground, cabin crew may need to adapt procedures dependent on the situation and number of cabin crew onboard. Regardless of the situation, cabin crew must remain situationally aware.

900 HOUR RULE

Report Text: I am cabin crew and I am a bit worried about flying over 900 hours. I have been flying for nearly 7 years and in my first year of flying I hit 900 hours, so was given ground duty days. These 900 hour days have been in my rosters quite regularly ever since then, but my hours have never gone all the way up to 900, they have been close, but never 900.

However in the middle of last month I was called out to fly, which put my hours over 900 by approximately 30 minutes. I queried this, but was told it is ok, because as long as my hours go back down again by the end of the month, I'm allowed to fly over 900 hours. Since then, I have completed a variety of flights. My hours were planned to be just over 900 by the end of the month with the following month's roster bringing my hours down to approximately 886, it has increased slightly due to a delayed flight and I have now reached just over 889 hours.

My company, and my union have now said that is fine, you can go over 900 hours, as long as at the end of your roster it is under 900 hours. So I asked if that means that the 900 hours was for 13 months, and I was told, no, we simply go from the last day of the month and back by 12 months. And it is therefore fine for me to end every month over 900 hours, because I already have the next month's roster, which will have my planned hours for less than 900, regardless of if I then go over it again by the end of the month.

I hope you can understand why I am confused. My question is quite simple - am I allowed to have flying hours over 900, as long as my planned flying hours for the end of my roster, regardless as to which month it is, are under 900?

CHIRP Comment: Cabin Crew flying hours are rolled hours and can be taken from the same day of the last year. CAP 371 states both the Rules Relating to Flight Crew and Cabin Crew Duty Hours. The annual limit on flying hours for pilots is 900 hours per year. However the maximum duty hours for cabin crew shall not exceed: 60 hours in any 7 consecutive days, but may be increased to 65 hours when a rostered duty covering a series of duty periods, once commenced, is subject to unforeseen delays. They must also not exceed 105 hours in any 14 consecutive days or 210 hours in any 28 consecutive days.

PASSENGER NOT SECURED FOR TAKE-OFF

Report Text: The crew secured the cabin pre take-off and the cabin secure was passed to the Captain. We received the call from the flight crew to indicate that we were at the runway and next in line for take-off. As the aircraft started to move at speed down the runway a passenger unfastened their seatbelt, left their seat and made their way towards the front galley. By this time, the aircraft was travelling extremely fast and the SCCM told the passenger that they must sit down as we were about to take-off. The SCCM did not leave their seat and remained strapped in. The passenger totally ignored them and the SCCM told the passenger once again to sit down, but they just walked straight through the galley and into the toilet.

They then remained in there during take-off and whilst the aircraft was climbing.

When they eventually came out of the toilet, they returned to their seat and one of the crew went and spoke to them informing them how dangerous their actions were. The passenger was extremely rude and questioned what the crew member was trying to explain to them and refused to accept any explanation. After this occurrence other passengers came to the galley and asked us about this and queried why they had done this and that it would not be tolerated by other airlines.

We as crew felt as so many people saw this incident it would only be right for the Captain to be informed and also show some presence by speaking to the passenger. The SCCM went into the flight deck and explained the situation to the Captain, asking if they would come and speak to the passenger. The Captain refused and said they would complete an ASR. On this flight we carry many frequent flyers as well as commuting crew, all of whom witnessed this incident. Although a crew member spoke to the passenger the overall consensus was that the Captain should take this more seriously and be shown to support their crew and have a presence in the cabin. Having had numerous conversations with other passengers I strongly believe that had the Captain been seen to speak to this passenger then it would appear that this incident had been dealt with. But it looked like the company just chose to ignore it. As crew we felt the Captain offered no support to us but left us to deal with the other passenger's reactions and concerns. I would add that this person was a young man and actually talked very loudly though the safety demonstration, so took no notice of any of the safety related issues. As crew our concern was the total lack of safety for themselves and other passengers and sends out the wrong message that maybe this is acceptable behaviour as no further action was taken.

Lessons Learned: The lessons I have learnt is how difficult it is to enforce the safety training we have been given. Thundering down the runway at 150 miles an hour is not the right time to get up out of your seat to go to the bathroom. We are responsible for our passenger's safety and there is only so much you can do. If passengers choose to ignore the safety rules then surely the responsibility lies with them.

CHIRP Comment: When faced with any 'non-normal event' it is important that cabin crew assess the situation and the associated risks to determine the appropriate course of action. In this instance the SCCM made the right decision to remain at her crew station during the take-off phase of flight. Operator's procedures for dealing with disruptive passenger events vary. However, it is unlikely that the commander would leave the flight deck in-flight to speak with a disruptive passenger as his priority is the safe operation of the aeroplane. It is critical that the crew work together to deescalate the situation. After events such as this a post-flight debrief may have assisted both the flight and cabin crew to discuss and understand the difficulties experienced.

ROSTER PUBLICATION RULES

Report Text: This year at work our rosters have come out a lot later than planned a few times. The company union

have told us that we should have our rosters no less than 10 days before they are due to be active. Even this was not achieved on one occasion.

Today my Captain told me that rosters should be published 14 days in advance according to EU law. I am not sure where they had heard this, and so I thought I should ask you. I did a quick search online and I did see something from 2012 suggesting that it was the case, but who knows what you can believe online.

So, I was wondering if you could tell me if there was any kind of rule as to when Cabin Crew roster publication must occur?

CHIRP Comment: This is not the first query CHIRP has received from cabin crew members regarding roster publication dates. This query was passed to the CAA FTL specialists for comment. CAP371 states that 'The company will publish rosters in advance so that operating crew can plan adequate pre-flight rest. Crew members will normally be given at least 7 days' notice of days off'.

In the UK, the new EASA ruling will come into effect in January 2015 with the full transition completed by January 2016. This will require rosters to be published 14 days in advance. For more information regarding the changes due to be made, please refer to CAA Information Notice 193 which can be found on the CAA website.

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Cabin Crew FEEDBACK is published quarterly and is circulated to UK cabin crew. Electronic copies are available to download from the CHIRP website - www.chirp.co.uk

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