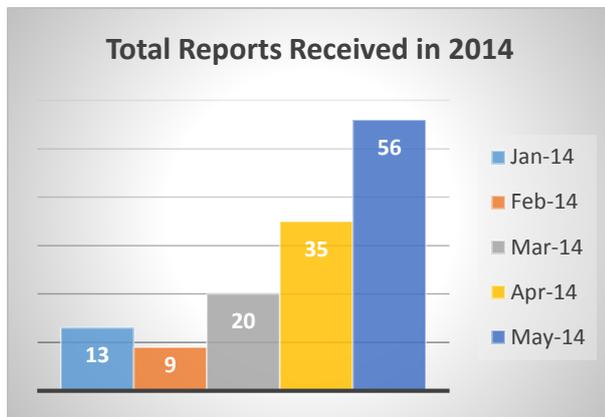


CHIRP CC FEEDBACK

Issue No: 52

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Hot Topics for May

- Rest Periods
- Tiring Rosters
- Effects of Fatigue
- Suspected Fume Inhalation
- Travelling time before a duty
- Operating with less than minimum crewing complement

EDITORIAL

FATIGUE AND MANAGING THE EFFECTS

The most frequent topics in CHIRP reports from cabin crew members relate to long flights, 'inadequate' rest and the effects of fatigue.

Fatigue is the general term used to describe physical and/or mental weariness which extends beyond normal tiredness. Fatigue usually results in impaired standards of operation with an increased likelihood of error, e.g. decreased reaction times, reduced attentiveness and impaired memory. Contributory factors can be the length of the previous rest period, subsequent time on duty, environmental conditions (temperature, noise, comfort etc.), workload, emotional stress (in both family life or at work), lifestyle (including sleeping, eating and drinking habits), fitness and overall health.

Fatigue is something that affects different people in different ways. One person may find a combination of duties to be particularly fatiguing while another person will manage the same combination without difficulty.

If a crew member feels that they are suffering from the effects of fatigue, they should inform the company in the first instance and complete any necessary paperwork regarding fatigue. This will allow the company to monitor

and analyse fatigue reporting trends. All fatigue reports submitted to the company are also monitored by the CAA.

Most safety management systems do not react to a single hazard report, however when there is a build-up of data it begins to identify a trend. A single fatigue report could be the result of factors associated with the individual submitting the report on a particular occasion; multiple reports point to a broader issue. No matter what the issue, changes are more likely if there is evidential data to highlight that there is a problem. You may not get a favourable response or reaction to every report, but you are adding to the data.

CABIN CREW REPORTS

ALLOCATED REST PERIODS AND FATIGUE

Report Text: A precautionary rapid disembarkation was necessary on the return flight to base and everything was actioned as per SOPs. This resulted in us completing a 7 hour duty on the ground (where we helped to assist the passengers). The flight was then cancelled and we went back to the hotel to rest. We then operated the flight back to base the next day on 15 hours rest with one crew member out of hours and positioning home.

My main reason for contacting CHIRP is because of fatigue. First of all before the initial return flight, most of the cabin crew were feeling tired as they had not managed to gain adequate sleep before the duty due to a long night flight out to the destination. This was then exacerbated by the incident on the ground, meaning one crew member was stood down for going out of hours and another crew member going into discretion. The effect the cancelled flight had on the cabin crew was to our rest. Once again for the second attempt on the flight home (successfully this time), cabin crew including myself were tired, with what we felt was too short a time to prepare our bodies and minds for an operational duty.

Lessons Learned: Whilst working for my company, I have been grounded twice for long periods of time. I see on a regular basis, our scheduling department rostering flights as per agreement, whilst I know this is not illegal to do, it does raise our workload per month, as well as our duty hours rapidly.

The consequence of this is that our rest periods are also cut down to a minimum, which in my personal opinion is affecting my fellow crew members and my

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ability to be an effective crew member in an emergency.

To stop any incidents from occurring onboard, rest periods downroute need to be reviewed and increased.

CHIRP Comment: CHIRP has received an increased number of reports from crew members concerned about rest allocated between duties and away from base. Several of these reports relate to a particular route and have been forwarded to the CAA for comment who have confirmed that the rostering of this duty was compliant with the company scheme.

In all instances, reporters have been encouraged to discuss their individual concerns with the scheduling department and also to complete a company report. Reports will be investigated and analysed which will enable the operator to monitor and trend the data taking appropriate action in accordance with fatigue avoidance measures.

MINIMUM REST

Report Text: On arrival back at base, we disembarked the passengers from the front door of the aircraft. There were two passengers left waiting for wheelchair assistance. At this point, it was 2025hrs. We had been due to clear at 2010hrs however we only went on chocks at around 2005hrs. After waiting on the aircraft with no sign of wheelchair assistance staff, I was conscious of my 0840hrs report the next day for a long multi sector day. The SCCM allowed us to leave at around 2040-2045hrs, at which point I figured I had less than 12 hours rest before my next duty.

12 hours is the minimum rest time when operating out of base as per our company agreement, yet crew were telling me that having experienced the same issues a number of times. Scheduling stated they had sent out emails to highlight that the minimum base time would change to 11 hours instead of 12hours for crew operating on one particular type of aircraft. No-one has received these emails.

By the time I got home, packed for the multi-sector day I was soon to operate on and eat some light food before going to bed; I had only 6 hours of sleeping time. I found that my clear time on my roster had changed from 2010hrs to only 2019hrs, which was vastly incorrect.

The clear time recorded meant I was just legal to operate the day after having had 12hrs 20mins crew rest, however in reality my realistic clear time meant I had around 11hrs 30-40mins rest, which was not enough.

Lessons Learned: My suggestion is that the company is looked at much more closely, as it is happening a lot more than before. Crew are now regularly having between 11hrs to 11hrs 59mins of rest between duties and it is worrying.

CHIRP Comment: When issues arise at the end of a duty period that prolong a crew member's duty period, for example waiting for wheelchair assistance to arrive at the aircraft as detailed in this report, it is wise for the individual crew members affected to discuss this with the Captain and they can then inform the scheduling

department of actual off duty times or crew members can request that the Captain do this on their behalf.

We recommend that if this issue continues to occur, it should be reported through the appropriate company reporting channels as well as CHIRP to enable the company to monitor the issue and investigate as necessary. The company scheduling agreement will detail the minimum rest requirement between duties, and should be readily available to all crew members.

POOR CRM

Report Text: During the cruise, a passenger pressed the call bell. They appeared to be very concerned about black smoke they could see from their seat which was coming from one of the engines.

I looked for myself and their observations were correct. I said I would ask the Captain. When told about what the passenger had seen, the Captain did not even check out the window and told me to tell the passenger that it was normal. I replied that the terminology the passenger had used made me feel that they knew what they were talking about and that they did seem genuinely concerned and would they be able to speak to the passenger to reassure them. The Captain said no and then continued to talk to the SCCM. I reassured the passenger to the best of my ability but I did not feel that they were satisfied.

The CRM we are trained on each year seemed farcical by the actions of this Captain and I feel very let down and unsafe knowing that he expressed no concern whatsoever.

Lessons Learned: Re-iterate CRM. It is a useful tool that was not used at all in this scenario.

CHIRP Comment: As highlighted in the editorial of Issue 46 of Cabin Crew FEEDBACK, four of the principal aims of CRM training in flight crew and cabin crew are to develop accurate and effective decision making, to develop good communication skills, to make effective use of all members of a crew and to gain a good understanding of each crew member's role.

Aviation is a safety critical industry where it is essential to work as part of a team to reduce the possibility of unsafe situations occurring. It is a widely known fact that poor CRM has been a contributory factor in previous aviation accidents, so it should be encouraged that if a crew member or a passenger - as this report detailed - observes a possible problem with the aircraft that these observations are immediately passed to the flight crew. Due to varying aircraft sizes and the ability to see from the flight deck what the passenger or crew member may have seen, it may be wise for the flight crew to check for themselves, if possible. The flight crew should provide a response to reassure both the cabin crew and the passenger and allay their fears.

BURNING SMELL IN THE CABIN

Report Text: Approximately two hours into the flight the SCCM announced that the in-flight entertainment system would be powered down to deal with an ongoing problem. I and the crew at the back of the aircraft thought nothing of this until the SCCM appeared to tell us that some of the crew, including the flight deck, had experienced a burning smell at the

front of the aircraft. A decision was taken by the flight crew to turn off ALL electronics in the cabin so the entertainment system, seat power, lights and galley power were isolated. We continued back to base constantly monitoring the situation and checking for further burning smells in any part of the aircraft. Power was briefly restored to the seats in order to secure the aircraft for landing.

One of the crew did experience a burning smell in the rear galley area towards the end of the flight and reported this to the flight crew. This happened on a further two occasions and the First Officer confirmed that they had also smelt something during the approach. The Captain declared an emergency at this point and we were given clearance straight away where we landed without incident and were met by a number of emergency vehicles.

Passengers disembarked in a normal fashion and the Captain then briefed the crew on the events throughout the flight. As the flight crew did not know what had been causing the burning smell, they had made decisions based on taking as many precautionary steps as possible. I asked the Captain what would happen to the aircraft as it was due to operate again later that day and they advised that they expected it to be grounded until a thorough check had been made into the possible causes of the burning smell(s).

Lessons Learned: I was surprised, given the unknown cause of the burning smell that the flight crew did not focus on getting the aircraft closer to the ground. The rationale for continuing back to base was obviously something that was discussed between the flight crew and the company, but it would be good to know more about this as the cabin crew were quite literally in the dark.

CHIRP Comment: Following the recommendation of various operators, Boeing elected to undertake a study of smoke and burning odour events that have occurred on aircraft. These studies provided valuable information so that operators can take the necessary steps to reducing these events. It is an ongoing investigation and results are released yearly.

All suspected cabin air quality events should be reported at the time to the flight crew and SCCM and then to the company by incident report form on landing, including the date, time, flight number, location and exact duration of the event. Medical attention should be sought if any passengers or cabin crew are displaying symptoms of headaches and nausea. Cabin air quality events should also be recorded in the tech log of the aircraft so that maintenance staff are aware and can monitor the issues.

MANUAL REQUIREMENTS FROM OPERATORS AND CAA

Report Text: From my initial training course back in the early 1990s up until last year's recurrent training, we have always been supplied with an individual cabin crew manual and prior to yearly training have always received inserts for these manuals with all the latest

updates. This has always been the 'norm' and what I understood to be a legal requirement by the company.

Our training department has said that it is not a requirement to provide cabin crew manual inserts as all live safety memos supersede keeping the manual up to date and are compliant with CAA regulations. This is not something the crew have ever been made aware of by the company nor can I find reference to this in any company documentation. Would you please confirm if this is correct?

Would you also be able to confirm if it is a CAA requirement for all cabin crew manuals to be visually checked by trainers every year during our recurrent training to make sure that they are up to date with all changes? If so, would there be a procedure for these checks and what format would they be in?

Is it also an acceptable procedure if a trainer was to advise trainees that the manual updates were not available but not to worry as they will ensure the crew get through the course?

CHIRP Comment: This report was forwarded to the CAA who confirmed that the operator had received approval to provide their crews with electronic access to relevant sections of the operations manuals. Safety notices had been issued to all crew members communicating these changes. There is no regulatory requirement for manuals to be visually checked during recurrent training, however a number of operators have established procedures to verify that crew members are maintaining up-to-date manuals.

Operators are required to establish a robust process for cabin crew training and checking of proficiency. Concerns with regards the conduct and impartiality of training and checking should be raised through the company confidential reporting scheme.

ELECTRONIC FEEDBACK

CHIRP produces and distributes over 3,000 paper copies of Cabin Crew FEEDBACK to different operators around the UK.

As cabin crew are not required to hold a licence issued by the CAA, we do not have the data to be able to send a paper copy to every cabin crew member as we do with flight crew, air traffic controllers and engineers. Paper copies of the latest issue of FEEDBACK are available from your crew report centre, however, if you are interested in receiving Cabin Crew FEEDBACK electronically, please email us at mail@chirp.co.uk

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