

CHIRP Cabin Crew FEEDBACK

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CABIN CREW FEEDBACK – YOUR OPINION....

CHIRP is committed to providing flight crew, cabin crew, air traffic controllers, flight information service officers, engineers and mariner's assistance and advice in relation to reported safety concerns. To be able to help reporters as best we can, we need to know how we can adapt our publications for the readership.

What do you think of this newsletter? Is it a good read? Are the reports relevant and of interest to you? Have we got the balance right?

If you have any thoughts or comments on the layout and content of Cabin Crew FEEDBACK, please send them to Stephanie Colbourne, Cabin Crew Programme Manager at the address at the foot of this page or via email to mail@chirp.co.uk.

PASSENGER SMOKING IN THE TOILET

Report Text: A passenger was caught smoking in the toilet on two occasions; he had been warned the first time. Their behaviour was concerning, a bit odd which led us to believe it was not just cigarettes that they had been smoking in the toilet. At first the passenger denied smoking but eventually admitted to it. The passenger's behaviour made me feel uncomfortable as at one point he grabbed and squeezed my arm to get my attention.

The Captain refused to fill out an incident form and told the crew it was because it would mean we would all have to wait at the aircraft for the incident to be dealt with. I have not experienced this before when an incident form has not been completed.

Lessons Learned - The incident should have been taken more seriously and the passenger should have learnt the seriousness of his actions and the potential consequences.

CHIRP Comment: Smoking during flight is prohibited by UK operators. Passengers found to be smoking on non-smoking flights may be arrested, cautioned and/or fined. In extreme cases, such passengers have then been banned from future flying with the airline involved. If a passenger refuses to comply with the cabin crews commands, it can be classed as disobeying a lawful command which could result in the aircraft having to divert to another station to offload the passenger. These type of incidents should be dealt with promptly to ensure the passenger is aware of the seriousness of their actions. If passengers caught smoking are not reprimanded for their behaviour, it may give the impression to other passengers that it is acceptable to act this way, when in fact safety advice should never be ignored.

Incident reports should be completed through the company reporting system by all crew members involved so that the company has the necessary information to conduct an investigation. Both flight crew and cabin crew can complete an ASR about an incident that has occurred, and alternatively can choose to complete a MOR (Mandatory Occurrence Report) through the CAA. More information on MOR reporting can be found on the CAA website.

ATLAS BOXES BEING USED AS CREW SEATS

Report Text: There are not enough seats in the galley area for all crew to be free of all tasks during a break in the service. The crew, not just on this particular flight and myself included, removed the metal atlas boxes from their stowages, and used them as 'seats' in order to sit on, and rest/eat.

Is there a flight safety risk in using the equipment for this purpose? Are they classed as secure when they are used for this purpose? Is there any risk of injury to the crew member or others if atlas boxes are used in this way - or should they be in their correct stowages and secure for the duration of the flight?

My company know that crew sit on atlas boxes, it has been brought up at many meetings, but there is no other provision.

CHIRP Comment: The CAA have advised that an operator may determine that this practice is acceptable to enable cabin crew to have a nutrition break during flight. However the canister/container will need to either be attended to or stowed when not in use by the crew members. The operator should determine procedures for the safety and

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welfare of their crew and passengers and through risk assessment verify that the procedures established ensure that they have undertaken all reasonable measures to reduce the potential for injury to occur.

PRE-FLIGHT BRIEFINGS

Report Text: My report is not regarding a specific event, but a newly adopted initiative by the company which has been enforced by memo and not official instruction by means of a procedure change.

We have always had to report 45 mins before departure. It has been standard in the past that crew need to board the aircraft at -25 mins to complete their checks and then start boarding passengers at -20 mins. This allowed 20 mins to conduct a full and proper briefing and proceed to the aircraft, which could be up to 5-10 mins away from the crew room at some bases.

Management have recently issued a memo, stating that ground teams will now have rear steps attached at -35 mins and that crew should brief and proceed to the aircraft as soon as possible. The memo also states that the briefing can be completed in 5 mins and that cabin crew can meet all briefing requirements in this time.

The SEP manual states that the SCCM needs to assign the crew positions for the flight, discuss any recent company memos and recent procedure changes, review inflight service, complete pre-departure inspections and discuss safety procedures when on the aircraft. This is not forgetting the non-safety related items such as grooming checks.

My issue is how the company expect a SCCM to complete a full and complete briefing in such a limited space of time. It is completely unrealistic. My worry is that crew will no longer complete a briefing at all due to the time constraints. Would it not be better to request crew report for work slightly earlier than put us under even more pressure than previous?

CHIRP Comment: Briefings are a very important part of flight preparation. They ensure open communication between all members of the crew and promote teamwork – which is very important when working on an aircraft. Some operators may choose to separate the briefings so that the flight crew and cabin crew brief for their different tasks separately, however in recent times some operators have chosen to combine these briefings.

From the time that a crew start their briefing, they should be focused on the duty they are about to complete and what is expected of them, this especially important when there is a set time limit to complete the pre-flight briefing. Depending on the size of the aircraft, a briefing of five minutes may be deemed acceptable. However for larger crews, the company would need to ensure that all crew members have completed an adequate briefing before flight.

CHIRP has contacted the CAA for more information as it would have to accept any changes to required safety briefings.

PASSENGERS CONSUMING OWN ALCOHOL ONBOARD

Report Text: I operated a 4 sector duty day and on sector 3 a number of large groups travelled. Among them there was a group of males on a stag trip. No-one was allowed to board who seemed unfit and all went well initially. We have a zero tolerance PA which was made due to the high volume of stags/hens visible in the cabin. We restricted alcohol sales to 2 drinks per passenger, but with the proviso that we would refuse to serve if it seemed appropriate.

Early in the flight, paper cups were passed around amongst a group that was sat towards the back of the aircraft and these cups were filled with some sort of alcohol. This had been planned by the group as the cups were Starbucks branded and I have seen these appear on a number of recent flights. The rest of the flight consisted of the cabin crew babysitting these groups, putting up with them shaking the seats, banging on the toilet door, using inappropriate language and asking the female crew inappropriate questions. In all, 9 bottles of airport-bought spirits were confiscated in-flight. The entire process was exhausting - scant attention was paid to the remainder of the passengers - among them 14 children and 4 babies.

The groups concerned want to get as drunk as possible, as quickly as possible. They have no regard for the cabin crew whatsoever and see our challenges as being funny. They have equally low regard for the flight crew - they create hell on our flights and then barge in to the flight deck on disembarking making uncouth comments, and demanding a 'selfie'. This culture is rife – this flight is only one example. We have three other destinations in our route network which are equally as bad.

My company has been aware of the issue for 8 years, to my knowledge, and has yet to appear to take it really seriously at my base. We can deny boarding to drunk passengers and can have the authorities meet troublemakers but we cannot control large-scale on-board consumption of tax-frees. There are various offers on in the terminal, encouraging multiple purchases of beers and shots etc - some passengers tell us the airport staff tell them to buy the extra ones and take them on-board. A live band plays at the gate at weekends, to boost the sales in the bar area. All of the above is undermining our safety standards but sadly as long there is an endless stream of revellers willing to fill a cheap seat somewhere hot, nobody cares. We do our best to keep the cabin checks to standard and provide a basic level of care to everyone onboard, but we are fighting a losing battle at my base, and year on year, it gets worse. We clear up a cabin of empty bottles and soiled seats, complete a turnaround in a very short time ready for another full flight. The implications for safety extend to our own - breaks are impossible, and we're left utterly exhausted, in this case we were off duty at shortly before 2am, and rostered back in for a late shift at between 3-4pm the following day. The current situation is unsustainable and needs addressing. I feel genuinely scared at times going to work, and my conversations with passengers outside the above groups lead me to believe they are too.

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Lessons Learned - Ban the carriage of tax-free alcohol on the aircraft - either by restricting its purchase at the airport on certain flights, or placing it into the hold until arrival. This is the only way we can control the state people allow themselves to get into. The current softly softly approach to these type of flights needs to be scrapped in favour of stern reminders about minimum standards of behaviour on-board - the TSA in America for example seems to instil far more fear and respect for aviation - in our country, we seem to think it's just the norm.

CHIRP Comment: The operator concerned was contacted by CHIRP and confirmed that they were aware of disruptive passenger incidents and were taking a number of actions to alleviate the problems. The issues relating to disruptive passengers were being reviewed centrally in the company whilst working closely with ground operations departments and security.

A recent news article in The Independent advised that Jet2 had introduced a new procedure where drunk passengers would be banned from flying with the company for life. It also discussed an interesting guide by the UK Flight Safety Committee on [how to handle disruptive passengers](#).

It has been suggested in a number of CHIRP reports that restrictions should be placed on passengers purchasing alcohol at the airport before boarding a flight and initiatives regarding holding the duty free alcohol purchases in the aircraft hold and sealing of the bags have been discussed with airport authorities, but getting any agreement is a lengthy process without government intervention.

NEW COMPANY PROCEDURE

Report Text: Boarding passengers for flights is becoming increasingly difficult. My company now instructs us to give out infant life jackets along with the lap belt, a change which increases the workload of boarding especially when the number of infants regularly exceeds 10+. We also give an in-depth pre-flight overwing briefing whilst I think that most other airlines just ask the passengers if they are happy to sit there or not or pass them an instruction card.

My company have also introduced new rules with regards to infants sat in front or behind an unmanned exit and 2 different minimum ages for ABPs and those who occupy an overwing seat.

Boarding is becoming more and more difficult. Most crew dread it on a daily basis due to the seating problems and issues I have mentioned above. It seems that my company is very slow in making any improvements. In my opinion this should include the pre-boarding of families, clarification of procedures and a simplified overwing briefing for passengers.

CHIRP Comment: This report was referred to the operator for comment who advised that changes had been made to current company procedures due to regulation changes regarding the provision of infant belts and flotation devices. Work was undertaken to relocate the equipment to help the crew when handing it out to passengers.

The overwing exit briefing is standard regulation and not a new procedure for the crew, the operator advised that the verbal briefing met all regulatory requirements. The operator also confirmed that they were aware that crew members felt that they had more tasks to complete before the flight and that the seating issues had not helped the situation but they are working to resolve the majority of these issues with the input of Ground Operations. The restrictions in seating rows, again is an EASA regulation change and therefore compulsory for the company.

Any cabin crew members who have encountered seating issues during flights have been asked to continue to report their concerns through the company reporting programme so that the company is kept aware and can monitor the situation closely.

Reports received by CHIRP are accepted in good faith. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of editorials, analyses and comments published in FEEDBACK, please remember that CHIRP does not possess any executive authority.

BACK ISSUES OF CHIRP FEEDBACK

Back issues of all publications are available on our website www.chirp.co.uk and also the [CHIRP App](#).
Black and White Printable copies are also available to [download](#) from the website.

Contact us....

We have now moved offices from Farnborough, please note the change of address below.

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