

# CHIRP Cabin Crew FEEDBACK

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## CONTENTS

- EDITORIAL – Cabin Crew Complement**
- Rest between Standby and Training Duties**
- Rules for Cabin Crew flying when Pregnant**
- Out of Date Crew Lifejackets**
- Aircraft in Operation with longstanding defects in Tech Log**
- Poor Aircraft Design**

## CABIN CREW COMPLEMENT

CHIRP has observed from some of the reports that we have received, that not all cabin crew seem to understand what is meant by 'minimum number of cabin crew required' for a flight and how this is calculated.

If an aircraft has a passenger seating capacity of more than 19, at least one cabin crew member must be assigned for flights when carrying one or more passengers onboard. Beyond that, the minimum number of cabin crew required must be at least the number of cabin crew members which were established during the aircraft type certification process for the cabin configuration used by the operator.

EASA lists some seven factors that it considers should be taken into account when determining whether additional cabin crew should be carried for safety reasons. These factors are:

- (1) the number of doors/exits;
- (2) the type(s) of doors/exits and the associated assisting evacuation means;
- (3) the location of doors/exits in relation to cabin crew stations and the cabin layout;
- (4) the location of cabin crew stations taking into account direct view requirements and cabin crew duties in an emergency evacuation including:
  - (i) opening floor level doors/exits and initiating stair or slide deployment;
  - (ii) assisting passengers to pass through doors/exits; and
  - (iii) directing passengers away from inoperative doors/exits, crowd control and passenger flow management;
- (5) actions required to be performed by cabin crew in ditching, including the deployment of slide-rafts and the launching of life-rafts;
- (6) additional actions required to be performed by cabin crew members when responsible for a pair of doors/exits; and
- (7) the type and duration of the flight to be operated.

Whatever number is derived, the number of cabin crew required to be carried must not be less than one for every 50 or fraction of 50 passenger seats installed on the same deck of the aircraft to be operated.

Consideration must also be given when operating an aircraft in unforeseen circumstances, such as when sudden illness or injury reduces the number of cabin crew available to operate below the required minimum complement and no replacement crew members are available. In such circumstances, the aircraft can be operated with a reduced number of cabin crew provided that at least one crew member is

carried for every 50 or fraction of 50 passengers present on the same deck of the aircraft and that the reduced complement includes a SCCM.

EASA requirements dictate that the minimum crew composition and the methods used for calculating this, be specified in the company Operations Manual and typically these will appear as SOPs.

The Operations Manual should also specify that when scheduling cabin crew for a flight, the required cabin crew complement should include some cabin crew (the number depending on the aircraft type) who have at least three months' experience as an operating cabin crew member. If a flight has been scheduled with less than this experience, the Scheduling department should be notified as soon as possible so that the experience levels can be adjusted accordingly.

[Back to Top](#)

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## **REST BETWEEN STANDBY AND TRAINING DUTIES**

**Report Text:** I was scheduled to do a late home standby until 2230L which could become flying duties landing up to 2359L (not including any delays) and then teach Recurrent Training the next day starting at 0800 - 1700L - all at my home base. I called our crewing department and was informed that this was legal, as air to ground doesn't count.

My question is, how can an instructor teach effectively if they have been either on call or flying until late at night with no minimum rest requirement? Regularly instructors are required to operate as crew until late at night and then go in early (0800) to teach a full day resulting in them having hardly any time to rest at all and having the responsibility to train and teach online crew or new cabin crew.

Lessons Learned - Instructors should be allocated a minimum rest period regardless of whether the duties are air to ground.

**CHIRP Comment:** There is currently no requirement for minimum rest between flying and ground duties. However, the company has advised that when training is planned, it will always try to ensure that there is minimum rest between the duties. The company offered to investigate why the reporter had only been rostered 9.5 hours of rest between the two duties, but the reporter declined this offer.

The relevant national Authority stated that this procedure was fully reflected within the company Operations Manual and that minimum rest after a standby duty where no FDP is assigned is 12 hours.

Training is complex for both the individual being trained and the person giving the training and both parties need to be sufficiently prepared and well rested to undertake the duty.

[Back to Top](#)

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## **RULES FOR CABIN CREW FLYING WHEN PREGNANT**

**Report Text:** It has been brought to my attention that we have a couple of cabin crew who are flying whilst pregnant. As an SCCM, I personally don't feel comfortable with an expectant mother operating given the day to day hazards from slips on the apron to pushing carts.

Our understanding is that as soon as a crew member becomes pregnant, she is to be grounded with immediate effect and assigned office duties due to the risks involved.

Could you please clarify this as I have asked for clarification from the company and not received it?

**CHIRP Comment:** The procedures for cabin crew flying when pregnant differs between operators and specific details relating to the company policy should be contained within their Human Resources handbooks.

The cabin crew member discussed in this report may have already told their employer of their pregnancy but chosen to continue operating or may not have not wanted to disclose this information as they were still in the first few weeks of their pregnancy.

On becoming pregnant, a crew member should inform their employer as a risk assessment may need to be completed by the company to allow the crew member to continue to operate, if they should wish to do so.

[Back to Top](#)

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## **OUT OF DATE CREW LIFEJACKETS**

**Report Text:** Inspectors boarded when we landed downroute. Their IDs were checked and verified and the cabin inspection began. All equipment checked for expiry dates and serviceability. Medical equipment

checked. 1 crew member shadowed the inspector and helped with the inspection. 4 out of 6 crew lifejackets were expired and all of them were under an occupied required seat.

Lessons Learned – There should be an audit system in place or an electronic system to flag when aircraft equipment is near expiration so replacements can be made to avoid future events occurring.

**CHIRP Comment:** The checking of life-jackets is a function which is normally completed by the company's engineering department during routine maintenance. However, each operator will have a different procedure and should stipulate in the Operations Manual if it is the responsibility of the cabin crew to do this.

CHIRP offered to pass this report to the company's engineering department for clarification and possible investigation; however, no response was received from the reporter which meant that this could not be completed. We are only able to discuss concerns with the company or the CAA with the agreement of the individual reporter.

If during safety and security checks before passenger boarding, a cabin crew member finds a life jacket or any other piece of safety equipment that is out of date, it should be reported to the operating Captain who can log it in the Tech Log and advise Engineering. In some cases, the item may need to be replaced before the aircraft departs and this information is contained within the aircraft Minimum Equipment List (MEL).

[Back to Top](#)

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## **AIRCRAFT IN OPERATION WITH LONGSTANDING DEFECTS IN THE TECH LOG**

**Report Text:** I have flown on one particular aircraft several times in the last few months. It is the oldest aircraft at our base and no one is writing the defects in the cabin defects book.

Window and ceiling lights are missing, there are broken plastic compartments in the cabin (which do not refer to safety but still make it more difficult onboard, especially when dealing with passengers) and most importantly the slide from the R2 door is not properly installed. As a result, when you open or close the door, the flight crew and SCCM advise us to exercise extreme caution so as not to inflate the slide. The toilet door has a broken handle and the bin door is also broken.

**CHIRP Comment:** CHIRP regularly receives reports about faulty items on aircraft and most of these reports have been passed back to the relevant company for investigation and comment. We have received two reports about this particular aircraft. Unfortunately no response was received from either reporter when asked for more details about the aircraft to be able to pass it to the company for investigation. The issue of the faulty slide is the most worrying in this report and this problem should have already been entered into the Tech Log of the aircraft.

When a faulty item is identified, it should be reported to the operating Captain so that they can ensure it is recorded in the Tech Log of the aircraft. The aircraft Minimum Equipment List (MEL) provides information about what faults may be carried and for how long. Each individual item has a specified maximum time limit for rectification; faults may be rectified at any point from when the fault is 'active' in the Tech Log. If there is already a pre-existing fault recorded in the Tech Log, it would be beneficial for this information to be shared between the crew members operating the flight as there may be alternative procedures stipulated in the MEL that need to be adopted to be able to depart.

It is also important to remember to report any concerns directly to the company as they can conduct enquiries and investigations if necessary.

[Back to Top](#)

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## **POOR AIRCRAFT DESIGN**

**Report Text:** Due to turbulence on the approach I hit the right side of my head against the galley wall. This caused discomfort and neck pain later during the flight. This is down to the extremely bad design of the rear galley on this aircraft and just one of the many failings in a very hazardous working environment. The galley wall protrudes into the galley area and parallel to cabin crew's heads. This has been documented on the companies reporting system. I believe this was flagged by safety officers at the Union and the company response was that there was no risk to crew. A physio has confirmed that I have suffered a whiplash injury from the incident.

I have raised six individual reports after the flight and have been asked by my immediate line managers what I expect to happen from such reports. I was told that the aircraft type was here to stay and if I didn't like it then find a new job!

Lessons Learned - I suggest this is a serious concern to be investigated to ensure cabin crew are safe whilst operating during turbulence or windy conditions. The aircraft in general has proved hazardous in many areas and in my opinion needs revising.

**CHIRP Comment:** This report was referred to the operator concerned with the consent of the reporter. The operator advised that the crew seat has been certified with regards to head impact criteria for forward movement and is therefore compliant from a safety perspective. This has been assessed onboard by the relevant department and when a crew member is in their seat and secure, they should be adequately restrained and clear of the galley side.

The company confirmed that they have received reports raising similar concerns as this is a new aircraft cabin for the company and they are reviewing all feedback received through reports. This information has been fed back to the aircraft and galley manufacturers as the concerns have related to the design of the crew station. The aircraft manufacturer is reviewing this with their safety panel and the company will continue to review concerns through their Safety Action Group meetings.

This issue is receiving a high level of focus from both the cabin safety and engineering teams as, although the seat is compliant, the company wants to ensure that any identified risks are mitigated. As the reporter has confirmed, they have completed a number of safety reports to the company and have been encouraged to continue to do so as the more information the company has, the more thorough a review can be completed.

[Back to Top](#)

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