

# CHIRP Cabin Crew FEEDBACK

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Our Chief Executive of the past five years, Ian Dugmore, is retiring in March. Ian has brought inspirational leadership, diligent dedication and a critical eye to efficiency in addressing the safety objectives of the CHIRP Programmes and its successful development. I believe the readership of this document would wish to endorse my sincere thanks to Ian for his contribution and to wish him good health and happiness in his retirement. Thank you Ian.

Capt. David Harrison, Chair of CHIRP Trustees

## Editorial

As advised by our Chair of Trustees, the CHIRP Chief Executive Ian Dugmore will be retiring later this month. Ken Fairbank will be taking over as Chief Executive. Ken has 40 years' experience in aviation as an Airline Captain, including 13 years spent as a Senior Inspector for the Air Accidents Investigation Branch. Welcome Ken!

Similar to 2017, CHIRP cabin crew reporting levels for 2018 were once again high with a total of 1,043 reports submitted. Nearly 400 of these reports related to a rostering issue which we had previously been notified of in 2017. On this occasion, both the company and the CAA were made aware of the issue and sought to resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

On some occasions, events that are reported to CHIRP need to be either passed to the company for further investigation or to the CAA for comment. Reporters are always advised of our intention to do this as in some cases, particularly if the reporter has already reported their concern to the company, it could reveal their identity. We feed back any information supplied by the company and/or the CAA to reporters and wherever possible, we include reports which could be of benefit to other cabin crew members in our Cabin Crew FEEDBACK newsletter.

It has come to our attention that on occasion reporters are unwilling to submit reports to their company, which could be a reason for CHIRP seeing such an increase in reporting over the past few years. Some have advised that they have previously reported concerns and been penalised for doing so, others have stated that they had not received any feedback which they have found frustrating. This leads to cabin crew not wanting to report and therefore serious safety concerns may have gone unreported to a company.

There is a responsibility on every cabin crew member to report safety concerns to their company. Reports = Data for analysis. Without data from safety reports, operators may not be aware of safety issues and therefore are not able to rectify them.

Industrial relations queries and concerns should be directed to Trade Union representatives as CHIRP does not have access to companies' industrial agreements and it is outside the remit of CHIRP to become involved in such matters. Should a cabin crew member feel that they cannot report safety concerns to their company, they could also choose to discuss their concerns further with the Trade Union representatives, especially in cases relating to Health and Safety and nutritional breaks.

The CAA Whistleblowing system is also available in cases where a person is concerned about revealing their identity to the company. They endeavour to respect the confidentiality of a Whistleblower unless agreed otherwise with them and process the information related to individuals in accordance with the Data Protection Act and the CAA General Privacy Notice. More information about the process is available on the CAA website.

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We provide a monthly report to the CAA so that they are aware of the numbers of reports received and what concerns have been reported to CHIRP. We have discussed the nature of reporting with the CAA on several occasions and we are aware that some operators are looking into what they can do to remind their cabin crew and flight crew of what to report, how and when. Remember that your company may also have a confidential reporting option, or a whistleblowing process that can be followed if required.

Numerous reported events should have been questioned or raised with the senior cabin crew member or Captain on the day but were not, instead only being reported afterwards. Three of the reports included in this Edition of FEEDBACK highlight the importance of raising concerns at the time. The moral of the story is, if you have a safety concern, raise it at the time with the SCCM or the Commander.

**Stephanie Dykes - Cabin Crew Programme Manager**

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## COMPLIANCE WITH FLIGHT CREW IN-FLIGHT REST PROCEDURES

**Report Text:** I was the SCCM on this longhaul flight returning to base. During the flight, the cabin crew member who was looking after the flight crew, informed me that they believed the flight crew had been taking horizontal rest on the floor of the flight deck.

They explained that when they had requested entry into the flight deck, as they entered, they had stumbled onto a make shift bed placed on the floor. Shocked, they had asked the flight crew if they had been sleeping on the floor. They then replied; "well it's better than taking rest in the chair"!

As such, the crew member did not inform me until after the event and when we were due to land. I considered reporting this internally but as I had not witnessed it myself, I felt I was unable to do this. Also, I have a fear that if I did report this, even if the flight crew were at fault, I would be penalised, going forward.

**CHIRP Comment:** The reporter did not advise how many flight crew were operating the flight so we have been unable to ascertain whether the flight crew were on Controlled Rest or using In-Seat Napping. The procedures for Controlled Rest are contained within the company Operations Manual and should they not be adhered to, this must be reported to the company for further investigation.

Unfortunately, as the information contained within the report could not be verified with the reporter, we have been unable to progress this report with the company which has meant that if the actions of the flight crew were not standard company procedure, no action can be taken to ensure that similar events do not re-occur.

Going back to the comments in the Editorial, it is important that if a cabin crew member feels that they can report their concerns to the company, that they complete a company report. We have noted that the reporter felt that they would be penalised for reporting such an event, regardless of whether it was wrong. In this case, the reporter could have used the confidential reporting system within the company or contacted the CAA to submit a Whistleblower report.

The SCCM has a responsibility to inform the company of any events or incidents that occur on flights, regardless of whether they have witnessed the event themselves.

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## PASSENGERS LYING ON THE FLOOR OF THE AIRCRAFT DURING FLIGHT

**Report Text:** I observed a baby lying on the floor in row 1 DEF throughout the flight. Even when the seatbelt signs were switched on in-flight, the cabin crew didn't check seatbelts or secure this baby.

On walking around the aircraft, I also observed other passengers lying on the floor asleep in the front row 1ABC and at the overwing exits.

I have over 30 years' experience as cabin crew and was under the belief that oxygen masks would not reach passengers - adult or baby - in the event of a decompression if they are lying on the floor and it is company SOP to stop this activity immediately. Is this not so for all airlines?

**CHIRP Comment:** The report was passed to the company for further investigation with the agreement of the reporter. The cabin crew who had operated the flight were contacted and advised they were not aware of an incident occurring where passengers were lying on the floor as this was not permitted, as per the company procedure.

Each company may have a different procedure which is detailed in the Operations Manual and should always be adhered to. In this case, the reporter could have spoken to one of the cabin crew members at the time and notified them of passengers sleeping on the floor of the aircraft so that they could be asked to move back to their seats. There is also the risk of these passengers being injured in the event

of turbulence. When completing the passenger service, trolleys could also catch on the passengers clothing or the passenger themselves. Cabin crew members could also trip over passengers particularly if the flight is during the night and the cabin lights have been dimmed. The reporter is also correct in their assumption that oxygen masks would not necessarily reach the floor in the event of a decompression.

Going back to the comments in the Editorial: if you see something you think could be unsafe, raise your concerns at the time.

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## OVERCROWDING IN THE GALLEY AREA

**Report Text:** After mainly working at the front of the aircraft on this flight, I went to the rear and was shocked and concerned to see 5 passengers and 2 cabin crew members crammed into the galley/doors 4 area. Surely this is a safety issue as there are only two drop down oxygen masks in that area? If there was a decompression, I believe there would not have been enough drop down masks for everyone.

I see this as a major procedure failure, surely we should ask passengers to wait behind the curtain in the aisle where there is plenty of spare oxygen masks should they be needed?

Lessons Learned - I will take it upon myself to suggest to my colleagues that we limit the amount of passengers waiting in the door 4 galley area.

**CHIRP Comment:** The galley area is used by the cabin crew to prepare the service for the passengers but also contains the cabin crew seats and safety and emergency equipment. It is therefore important that this area is not cramped so that should an in-flight emergency event occur, the cabin crew have the space and equipment to deal with the situation.

The reporter is correct in their assumption that there would not be enough drop down masks in the galley area for the cabin crew members and passengers to use during a decompression. If there are several passengers waiting in the galley area to use the restrooms, the situation should be managed by the cabin crew by asking the passengers to wait behind the curtain in the aisle. It should be noted that other aircraft types may have a different number of masks available in the galley/toilet areas.

Regardless of whether the situation has been managed on the aircraft by the cabin crew, the cabin crew involved should complete an incident report to the company on landing. This will then allow the company to monitor reports for trends and will be able to see whether this is frequently occurring and whether an alternative procedure needs to be adopted to manage future situations.

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## POSITIONING AFTER OPERATING A LONG FDP

**Report Text:** All times are in GMT. Reported at 14:15 for a flight from AAA - BBB. Landed at 03:30. Waited at BBB airport for 3 hours in our uniform before positioning from BBB to CCC. By the time we arrived at our hotel in CCC we had been on duty for nearly 22 hours.

These flights are physically and mentally demanding. Both the outbound to BBB and return to AAA sectors are day flights. We clear into base at 18:00 after our pick up in CCC at around 02:00.

**CHIRP Comment:** The total duty periods to which a crew member may be assigned shall not exceed 60 duty hours in any 7 consecutive days, 110 duty hours in any 14 consecutive days and 190 duty hours in any 28 consecutive days. These should be spread throughout the roster period as evenly as practicable. Each operator has the responsibility to ensure that flight duty periods are planned in a way that enables crew members to remain sufficiently free from fatigue so that they can operate to a satisfactory level of safety under all circumstances and should take into account the relationship between the frequency and pattern of flight duty periods and rest periods and give consideration to the cumulative effects of undertaking long duty hours combined with minimum rest periods.

Multiple reports have been received regarding a particular pattern of positioning flights so the operator has been informed. The consolidated concerns of reporters have also been sent to the CAA for their consideration.

It is however important to ensure that should any cabin crew member not be able to achieve sufficient rest between the duties and are not fit to report for the return journey, that they report as such to the company.

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## USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES DURING CRITICAL PHASES OF FLIGHT

**Report Text:** On countless occasions I look across at the crew member at the door on the other side of the aircraft and it seems as soon as we have landed their phone comes out and their attention is solely on that. On a couple of occasions, they are on their phones during the final descent as soon as they can get a signal. Unfortunately, I wish this was just a main crew problem, but invariably the senior crew are just as bad.

We are told that we should be in the semi-brace position for landing and during taxi. In my opinion how can anyone be alert, observant and reactionary if their attention is taken up by their phone? I often feel that I am the only one who is sitting there properly. I have spoken to a SCCM about it who just shrugged their shoulders and said, 'it's the way of the world now, get used to it'.

I have submitted several incident forms concerning this, but so far nothing has been done and no reminders issued.

Thank you for your time reading this, I could not, in all conscience, continue without feeling I had tried to do something or at least told someone about it.

**Lessons Learned:** In my opinion, issue a notice or memo restricting the use of mobile phones and company issued and personal iPads (that people use to read the PA's) on jump seats and during all critical phases of flight.

**CHIRP Comment:** Any events where crew members are using their phones at times when this is not permitted should be reported directly to the company for further action. The crew member/s should also be reminded of the company procedure at the time of the event.

This report was referred to the company for comment who confirmed that the procedure for when cabin crew can and cannot use their mobiles phones is detailed within the Operations Manual. If they are non-compliant with this procedure, it is expected that the SCCM will complete an incident report to the company after the event.

The CAA have also been advised of this report and have confirmed that in common with other operators, the company has a policy with regards to the use of personal devices whilst on duty. Also, procedures in the Operations Manual document cabin crew actions during taxi and critical phases of flight, including the necessity for cabin crew to be focused on flight safety aspects. If a cabin crew member is using a device in contravention of company policy and procedure this is a matter for the company to address in the manner that they consider to be most appropriate.

We printed another report in the last Edition of Cabin Crew FEEDBACK to highlight that electronic devices should not be used during critical phases of flight. Since then, we have received another two reports from cabin crew members working for different UK operators regarding colleagues that have been using their phones during critical phases of flight. It is very important that during the critical phases of flight, cabin crew members are seated at their assigned station on the aircraft and do not perform any activities other than those required for the safe operation of the aircraft. We are aware that some operators permit the use of devices to read PAs, access passenger information or safety/company materials, this information will be documented in the company Operations Manuals. However, when they are not in use during flight, they should be stowed safely.

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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.

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