

CHIRP Cabin Crew FEEDBACK

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CHIRP News

In February, Debbie Elliott stood down from her position as Chair of the Cabin Crew Advisory Board. Debbie joined the CCAB in June 2011 and then took over as Chair in March 2014. Both CHIRP and the members of the CCAB would like to thank her for the time and assistance she has given the Cabin Crew Programme over the last 8 years and wish her well in her future endeavours with TAG Aviation.

CHIRP is pleased to announce that Lisa Huttleston, Cabin Safety Manager for easyJet and a longstanding member of the CCAB has agreed to take over from Debbie as the new Chair.

Lisa has over 25 years' experience in aviation and many years operating cabin crew and has worked for easyJet since 2004. She is a cabin safety subject matter expert, responsible for safety and compliance in the cabin relating to safety equipment and cabin crew procedures. Lisa is also a member of the Cabin Safety Liaison Group (CSLG), a committee made up of UK AOC Heads of Crew Safety/Training, working together for best practice related to cabin safety and training.

The Chair and members of the CCAB act as individual expert advisors and review the reports submitted through the programme at the meetings which are held three times a year. They provide counsel to the Cabin Crew Programme Manager on the most appropriate way that issues may be resolved. CHIRP is very grateful to them for their assistance and views, especially when they all hold positions with UK and Irish operators and have many other commitments outside of CHIRP.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their assistance both in the past and in the future.

Stephanie Dykes - Cabin Crew Programme Manager

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SAFETY DEMONSTRATION NOT SEEN

Report Text: Onboard this flight, only two members of cabin crew conducted the manual safety demonstration. These were both positioned within the first nine rows of the aircraft. Especially with the demonstration being manual and a variance in the lifejackets, passengers would have not been able to see the procedures, subsequently causing uncertainty during an evacuation.

There were four members of cabin crew on board this flight, two of whom were in the galleys. The crew conducting the demonstration did not repeat it further down the cabin.

CHIRP Comment: Regulations do not state how an operator should deliver the safety demonstrations to passengers, only that operators should ensure that all passengers are briefed before departure. Depending on the aircraft that the flight is operated on, this may determine whether the safety demonstration is completed manually by the cabin crew or through the inflight entertainment system. The safety demonstration must advise passengers of the emergency exits onboard, what to do in the event of an emergency landing/ditching, the use of the seatbelt, the location and use of lifejackets, the location and use of dropdown oxygen masks and the brace position to be adopted in the event of an emergency landing. These demonstrations are carried out for the benefit of all passenger's safety and must be clear and visible to all.

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This report was sent to the operator for comment and they have confirmed the company SOP is that all operating cabin crew members should participate in the safety demonstration, which includes one cabin crew member who is situated in the galley to read the text that accompanies the demonstration.

Concerns of this nature should always be raised at the time with the SCCM as, if passengers may not have seen the safety demonstration, it gives the crew an opportunity to rectify this and repeat it before departure. In this case, the reporter was a crew member travelling as a passenger, so they did not speak with the SCCM regarding their concerns, although they could have politely done this. However, this event could still have been reported internally through the company reporting programme which would have then permitted the company to conduct any investigations that were required. Just because a crew member is not part of the operating crew, it doesn't mean that they can't report safety concerns, and they have a responsibility to do so. A crew member's perspective is also different from that of a passenger, for example this crew member knew that the life jackets are different on other aircraft, but a passenger would not know this - just what is onboard their flight. We do however appreciate the reporter submitting their concerns to CHIRP, as it meant that these could be passed to the operator.

It should be noted that different airlines have varying requirements for the number of crew demonstrating in the cabin, this will depend on crew complement, length of aircraft cabin, number of aisles and number of passengers.

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LACK OF EXPERIENCED CABIN CREW COULD POSE A SAFETY RISK

Report Text: I did try and get more experienced cabin crew before this flight but sadly, we were within the legal limits of experience by 2 days.

On the first flight, the cabin secure was poorly completed along with a near go-around situation on 2nd leg back into base.

On the outbound flight and aware of their inexperience, I rightly decided to check their checks and I found 3 armrests up and a bag blocking a row, behind the curtain. I rectified these and advised the cabin crew of my findings. Before landing, I then found 4 armrests up but no bag in any occupied row. I decided they needed help and advice, so I showed them how to see all the armrests in one glance from either the front or the rear of the cabin when there are spare seats. They took that tip on board.

On landing back into base, which was a busier flight, the closing of the bar computers was required so one cabin crew member secured the cabin alone front to rear, while the other was dealing with the bar computers. I was satisfied that the whole cabin had been secured completely when I saw the crew reach the end of the cabin. Then, the landing gear came down and I saw one crew member back in the middle of the cabin talking to a passenger and the other one still dealing with the bar computers. I immediately called them and instructed them to take their seat. This was still too slow as I could see they did not react with urgency to the landing gear coming down.

I do know that with experienced crew, none of these situations would have happened: We had less than 60 seconds before the Captain would initiate a go-around. This does not allow time for the review period and causes increased pressure on the flight crew, waiting for the cabin secure call before decision time.

On the turnaround back at base, I set my expectations for the last flight: when 10 minute call is made, all non-safety duties must stop and both crew members must secure the cabin (the bar computers could be done after landing), no armrests could be up and no bags in aisles. They understood and complied.

While this experience may be okay, it is not right in my view. The experience threshold needs to be reviewed; 6 months seems more reasonable, having passed probation.

Lessons Learned:

- Now this has happened, I can make a stand for not wanting such an overall young team again.
- Get the flight crew to increase the time from 10 minutes to 15 minutes to landing call.
- I would suggest the "experience" threshold be linked to probation deadline of 6 months.

CHIRP Comment: A number of cabin crew reports have been received regarding experience levels of cabin crew on flights. These reports have not been specific to one UK operator but most of the concerns raised have related to the number of cabin crew rostered to operate a flight who have had limited experience with that particular operator. The reports have stated concerns regarding the effect that low experience levels has on the other cabin crew members when completing tasks on the aircraft.

Regulation states that 'the procedures should specify that the required cabin crew includes some cabin crew members who have at least 3 months experience as an operating cabin crew member'. It does

not stipulate whether this level of experience should be with a previous or current operator. Each operator will have a different procedure for determining how they comply with this which will be detailed in the Operations Manual.

It is often the responsibility of the SCCM to allocate experience around the aircraft, which may be completed during the pre-flight briefing as this is when experience levels should be discussed. It should always be considered whether a cabin crew member has previous flying experience with another operator, despite them possibly having limited flying experience with the current operator.

Senior cabin crew members complete many of the same duties as cabin crew but they are also there to supervise and manage the tasks of the cabin crew. The SCCM should be monitoring the cabin crew during the flight and assisting them with the correct procedure if it is required. The expectations of the SCCM (in line with company procedures) and the work to be completed during the flights that day should be set during the pre-flight briefing and before commencing the first sector, so that if necessary all cabin crew can be reminded of what is required of them. The pre-flight briefing is an excellent opportunity to highlight any crew who are less experienced and may need extra support; remember we were all new once! It is important for all cabin crew to remain situationally aware throughout the flight and communicate with the other cabin crew and the SCCM if they are struggling and need assistance - there is no shame in asking for help or guidance.

If a member of the cabin crew is relatively inexperienced and may need longer to secure the cabin for landing, extra time can be requested from the flight crew who can agree to increase the preparation for landing call to accommodate this. This is the flight crew's decision to make but it is likely that they would prefer to be told in advance of any potential delays when securing the cabin as this will lessen the probability of having to make a go-around with short notice.

Safety must always come above service, so if the preparation for landing call has been made by the flight crew and the bar computers have not yet been closed down, these should wait to be completed after landing. Cabin crew must secure the cabin for landing and focus on safety tasks only and in line with their company SOPs.

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ROSTERING DUTIES CLOSE TO MAXIMUM FDP AND THE USE OF COMMANDERS DISCRETION

Report Text: Cabin crew were rostered an 11-hour 45-minute duty commencing at 06:55 for a four-sector day.

Prior to the final sector, a technical fault was discovered on stand resulting in a 1 hr 6-minute delay departure and a 1 hr 12-minute delay back into base. This resulted in a 12-hour 57-minute duty for the cabin crew on a maximum FDP of 12 hours with the cabin crew working 57 minutes into Captains discretion.

CHIRP form completed as the company regularly roster duties which are close to the FDP with the expectation the cabin crew will work into Captains Discretion in order to protect the operation.

As the SCCM, this is the second time I have worked into Captains Discretion in 8 days (with 3 days off in between) due to very tight rostering with no consideration or time allowance for possible delays or unexpected disruption. Additionally, half of this crew were also rostered trips reporting the following day.

CHIRP Comment: Operators may roster flights close to the maximum FDP as EASA FTLs permits this for both cabin crew and flight crew. However, cabin crew and flight crew should not frequently be exceeding the maximum daily FDP. 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. There is also a responsibility on each crew member to know the maximum FDP that they can operate and they should be adequately rested to ensure that they can complete the maximum FDP including the discretion period that could be utilised if required.

The conditions to modify the limits on flight duty, duty and rest periods by the Commander (The Use of Commanders Discretion) in the case of unforeseen circumstances which start on or after the reporting time rely on the following points;

i) The maximum daily FDP may not be increased by more than 2 hours unless the flight crew has been augmented;

ii) If on the final sector within an FDP the allowed increase is exceeded because of unforeseen circumstances after take-off, the flight may continue to the point of destination or an alternate aerodrome;

iii) The rest period following the FDP may be reduced but can never be less than 10 hours.

As per EASA FTL regulations, the Commander should consult all of the operating cabin crew on their alertness levels and whether they are fit to continue a flight before deciding whether the FDP will be increased or a rest period reduced. The Captain should be made aware of any information which could affect their decision to extend an FDP or reduce a rest period, such as differing report times, whether any of the crew were called from a standby duty to operate the flight/s, and whether any of the crew have entered into discretion on a previous duty that week.

It is hard to predict at the beginning or mid-way through a duty whether a crew member will feel fit to continue a duty into discretion. Therefore, crew should always report fit to complete the full duty, and only class themselves as unfit should that be the case at any given time.

Commanders Discretion should only be used in unforeseen circumstances and if discretion is used, the Captain should complete a discretion report to the company either on arrival back at base or on completion of the final sector. Should the FDP be increased or the rest period be reduced by more than 1 hour, the discretion report should be sent to the CAA (by the company) within 28 days of the event occurring.

It is not explained within the regulation how the Commander should consult their cabin crew on the use of discretion, so on large aircraft it could be difficult for them to achieve a face-to-face discussion with each crew member before a flight departs. The cabin crew can then speak with the SCCM and the Captain if they feel that they are unfit to continue with the duty, which should be the case at any time a crew member feels unfit.

Just because a flight is going into discretion regularly, does not mean that something may be amiss during the rostering stage as discretion should only be used in unforeseen circumstances and these are likely to be different for each flight that enters into discretion. The CAA monitors the use of Commanders Discretion by way of MOR reports and discretion reports submitted by operators. CHIRP also monitors reports that have been submitted and trends of flights which have entered into discretion. We also complete a monthly update to the CAA, so they are aware of what has been reported to CHIRP and the flight routes which have entered into discretion. We do not however pass on specific flight details, such as the date and flight number to protect the reporter's identities.

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POSSIBLE SAFETY HAZARD OF HAVING CURTAINS CLOSED BETWEEN CABINS DURING THE SERVICE

Report Text: I am concerned about the curtain being closed between cabins during meal services. All crew are out on the trolley during the service, so no one is near or occupies the galley during the meal service.

Initially when the aircraft was introduced, I contacted the Safety department and I thought that it became a service standard that the curtain remained open between the cabins so that the crew had a clear view of the rear galley. On our other long-haul aircraft, there is either a crew member in the vicinity of the galley or they are able to see it. I want to see it made mandatory that the curtain remains open during meal services.

I'm flying with crew that said they haven't heard that it was a service standard to leave the curtain open and I can't find it anywhere in the manual. Crew seem oblivious or not concerned with the curtains being shut and having no view of the rear cabin or galley.

With the curtain closed and all crew in the cabin it literally only takes a matter of minutes for something to happen in the galley; an oven fire, a passenger collapses, a passenger accessing drinks trolleys etc. An oven fire is my biggest concern!

I copied in my personal manager and other senior managers, I have contacted Safety and none of them are taking me seriously. Safety is paramount and I'm concerned for my own wellbeing let alone everyone else's.

CHIRP Comment: The concerns of the reporter have been raised with the operator. It has been confirmed that it is a company service standard to have the curtains open between cabins during the service and that this information is contained in the Operations Manual and available for all cabin crew to review. Although this is a service standard (not a safety standard) for this operator, these procedures

should still be adhered to by all operating cabin crew during flights and those who are not aware that curtains should be open between cabins during service, should be reminded of the correct procedure. The curtains being closed between cabins during the service section of the flight would not prevent cabin crew from missing an event occurring in the galley. Despite being busy during the service, crew must remain situationally aware of their surroundings and the tasks that they need to complete. One crew member would usually be facing towards the galley when working on a trolley, who can monitor passenger movement in and out of the galley areas. Toilet and galley checks are also required to be completed throughout the flight. It is also likely that when delivering the service to the passengers that crew will need to return to the galley to collect items for passengers, which is another opportunity to check this area and ensure situational awareness.

The reporter was correct to report their concerns to the company and then to CHIRP as they were worried that their concern had not been heard. Before implementing a new company procedure, an operator must complete the necessary risk assessments to ensure that safety will not be compromised by the proposed new procedure. In this case, the company have confirmed that the appropriate risk assessments had been completed before adopting the changes. It is important that crew members ensure that they remain up to date with any changes to operating procedures (safety and service), otherwise there is a risk that crew are operating on the same aircraft but to different standards, which in itself could be a safety risk.

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