

# CHIRP Cabin Crew FEEDBACK

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## Roster related concerns reported to CHIRP

Over the past few years, CHIRP has seen an increase in reports being submitted stating specific concerns relating to the rostering of flights and the planning of rest periods between duties.

In some cases, the rosters that have been submitted to CHIRP have been for future roster periods and have not yet been operated by the cabin crew member. We have recommended to these reporters to raise any concerns that they may potentially have directly with the scheduling department at the time that the roster is issued to them. The scheduling department has the ability and responsibility to review rosters to ensure that they have been planned in compliance with EASA FTLs and if applicable, any industrial agreements. If changes need to be made, they can then be completed before the roster period starts. CHIRP does not have access to rosters or industrial agreements.

Fatigue concerns relating to the rostering of flights should be reported before a duty or series of duties has been completed wherever possible. This is very useful for operators for analysis and can be used in conjunction with instances of fatigue that are reported by cabin crew after completing the duty.

## Feedback on FEEDBACK

CHIRP produces FEEDBACK newsletters for the Air Transport, General Aviation, Cabin Crew, Ground Handling and Security, as well as the Maritime community. Reports that have been submitted to CHIRP and have been reviewed by the relevant Advisory Board are selected for inclusion in these newsletters. We use these reports to highlight events that have occurred and provide advice to reporters and readers on how best to manage a similar situation should it occur. Not all reports submitted to CHIRP will appear in FEEDBACK; this decision is taken by the [Cabin Crew Advisory Board \(CCAB\)](#) and the Cabin Crew Programme Manager. Sometimes reports are not published due to an inability to disidentify a report sufficiently to preserve the confidentiality of the reporter and/or the operator without losing its sense. Others are not published because the report may not refer to cabin safety issues or may need to be referred to the operator or the CAA for further action or comment. If we plan to print a report, we advise the reporter of this.

Post publication of FEEDBACK we welcome both positive and negative comments on the reports and responses that we have printed. These will then be taken back to the Advisory Board for further discussion.

It is important to remember that CHIRP and its Boards have no 'executive authority' to enforce changes within an operator. Our role is to ensure that concerns are raised at the relevant level within an organisation or the CAA. Our aim is to contribute to the enhancement of flight/cabin safety and to assist reporters as best we can by giving advice and/or guidance with their operator.

If you have any comments regarding any previous editions of Cabin Crew FEEDBACK, feedback on this edition or the work of CHIRP, please contact [mail@chirp.co.uk](mailto:mail@chirp.co.uk).

[Stephanie Dykes - Cabin Crew Programme Manager](#)

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## TAKE-OFF WITH CONTAMINATION ON THE WINGS PREVENTED BY CABIN CREW

**Report Text:** On reporting for duty, I learnt that our flight was delayed due to the late inbound aircraft. Following the briefing, I walked from the crew room with the rest of the crew to the terminal where we waited for our aircraft to arrive. During this time, it had also started to snow quite heavily. Following the arrival of our aircraft, all the crew went on board and I proceeded with my cabin checks and preparation for the flight whilst the other crew members did the same. At this point the Captain also did their walkround.

Due to the delay, as soon as we had finished our checks, the passengers started to board the aircraft. After closing my door at the end of boarding, I noticed that there was a significant layer of snow accumulating on the wings. At that stage I didn't mention it to any of the other crew because I assumed that the pilots must be aware of it and that they must have requested de-icing, especially considering that three other aircraft due to depart at around the same time as us had requested this service.

However, during the announcement to the passengers, the Captain made no mention of having to de-ice the aircraft (which they normally do to inform the passengers what is going to happen in these circumstances) which I found strange but still I didn't say anything because I was still sure that they were going to do it. I was also thinking that, as experienced pilots, they must know what they are doing and it wasn't my place to tell them how to do their job.

Shortly after this, we armed the doors for departure and took our positions for the safety demo. During the safety demo, I heard the flight crew lock the flight deck door and start the engines and this was when it became clear to me that they had no intention of de-icing the aircraft. Towards the end of the safety demo, our aircraft had begun the short taxi to the runway and, by the time we had finished the demo, it was already at the holding point ready to enter the runway for take-off as soon as we passed the cabin secure to the flight crew. Therefore, before beginning to secure the cabin, I told the SCCM that there was a significant layer of snow on the wings and that it would be a good idea to let the pilots know. They looked at the wings and agreed with me and called them. They initially replied to "stand by" then we entered the runway, turned around and exited it and parked in a holding area. At this point an announcement was made to the passengers to explain what was happening and the FO came out from the flight deck, asked two passengers sat by the wings to get up from their seat while they shone a torch light over them. They then confirmed that it was ice, went back into the flight deck and the Captain then made an announcement to say that we would have to de-ice the aircraft.

So much snow was falling that even after de-icing the right wing, the snow was building up again whilst the opposite wing was being de-iced. The Captain then called me on the interphone to thank me for bringing it to his attention and said that they had only seen snow on the wing during their walkround but no ice and that was why they had not requested de-icing. My understanding was that there should be zero contamination on the wings during take-off be it snow or ice. In the end, we were delayed so much that the runway was closed due to the snow and our flight was cancelled.

Lessons Learned - In the future, I will report any contamination on the wings straight away without assuming that the pilots are going to request de-icing. I feel it is important that the pilots do not allow the delay to a service, or any other factors incite them to depart as quickly as possible when safety is compromised.

Following several aircraft accidents in the past, we know today that an aircraft should not attempt to take-off with any snow or ice on the wings so I feel it is extremely worrying that despite this, they were still going to attempt to take-off and also that nobody, except myself had noticed the severity of the situation which potentially could have ended in disaster.

**CHIRP Comment:** After discussing the event with the reporter, they confirmed that they had chosen to report the event to CHIRP rather than through the company reporting system as they felt that they may be penalised for reporting to the company. There is however a responsibility (and Regulatory requirement) on all cabin crew members to report their individual safety concerns to the company wherever possible. By reporting this event to the company, it would have permitted them to investigate further and ask the operating flight crew their views on what had occurred. Being able to openly discuss events enables operators, pilots and crew to improve safety for the future.

However, it is encouraging to note that the reporter chose to raise their concerns with the flight crew at the time and which meant that the wings could be checked again by the flight crew and de-icing could be completed before departure. The flight crew reacted positively to the concerns raised by the cabin crew member and explained why they had not elected to have the aircraft de-iced after the walkround had been completed. If any member of cabin crew has any concerns relating to potential ice or snow

on the wings or if they are unsure as to if de-icing has been completed, they must raise these as soon as possible with both the SCCM and the operating Captain. It must never be assumed that someone else has already spotted a potential safety issue - it is better to report something twice than not at all.

Each operator will have a different procedure relating to contamination on the wings and other aircraft surfaces; this will be based on the requirement by the aircraft manufacturer and will be included in the FCOM (Flight Crew Operations Manual). For example, the Airbus FCOM states that critical surfaces be checked; including leading edges, upper wing surfaces, vertical and horizontal stabilizers, all control surfaces, slats and flaps. A thin hoarfrost\* is acceptable on the upper surface of the fuselage.

\*Thin hoarfrost is typically a white crystalline deposit which usually develops uniformly on exposed surfaces on cold and cloudless nights. It is so thin that surface features (lines or markings) can be distinguished beneath it.

If unsure of the company procedure, it should be queried with the flight crew as they can explain what is permitted and why. But remember that the most important thing in such incidents is to report your concerns as soon as possible.

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## SHOULD DE-ICING BE COMPLETED AFTER PASSENGERS BOARD THE AIRCRAFT?

**Report Text:** Setting up the bar cart for the service in the rear galley, a passenger came to use the rear toilet and slipped on the galley floor due to de-icing fluid. They wiped my feet out from beneath me, my right foot went under the cart causing bruising to the top of my foot. The galley floor was wiped twice after passengers had boarded and before departure.

Why can't de-icing be done after passengers have boarded and doors closed when boarding via the steps? This happens every winter and is a dangerous hazard.

**CHIRP Comment:** CHIRP responded to the reporter and requested their permission to discuss the reported event with the company; unfortunately, no response was received. As we were unable to discuss this specific event, instead CHIRP queried the de-icing procedures with the company and have since passed this information back to the reporter.

The company confirmed that if temperatures drop overnight, it may occasionally occur that de-icing is completed before passenger boarding. However, de-icing is normally completed after. Unfortunately, de-icing fluid can lie on the tarmac regardless of when it is completed as other aircraft will also have been de-iced on the same stand, this can then be trodden into the aircraft by passengers and crew. Campaigns have been completed by this specific operator each winter season during which, the company has asked the cabin crew to mop up de-icing fluid wherever possible with paper towels and cloths provided onboard each aircraft for this purpose. Should the amount of fluid walked into the galley be too much for the cabin crew to clean up, they should notify the Captain who can request that engineering attend the aircraft to complete this or arrange for the cleaners to visit the aircraft before departure.

Going forward, it is important that events such as above be reported directly to the company for further investigation and monitoring purposes. Generally speaking, as each operator's cleaning procedures may vary, it is important that crew are aware of their working environment and take care to ensure that there are no slip or trip hazards, and take action following their own company procedures if concerns are observed.

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## SAFETY CONCERNS ABOUT CABIN CREW DISARMING DOORS DURING TAXI

**Report Text:** Today on arrival onto stand, we were being marshalled by a ground crew member. We receive the call to unarm the doors just after we have turned on to the centre line of the stand and straightened up, so the aircraft is always moving. Today excessive brakes were applied, forcing crew to either fall into their seat or grab hold of something for support

This happens on a regular basis, especially on one of our aircraft types where the crew members are responsible for more than one door. The crew seat at the rear door is in a very awkward position and it's only a matter of time before someone gets injured.

Lessons Learned: Door mode selection should be made after seat belt signs have been turned off.

**CHIRP Comment:** On replying to the reporter, no response was received so we have been unable to confirm whether this event has been reported directly to the company for further investigation. If cabin crew are injured whilst completing work-related tasks, it must be formally reported to the company

following the standard company procedure. The flight crew should also be notified as they will be able to confirm whether there were any issues regarding the arrival stand or equipment located on the ramp which may have required them to brake suddenly.

Operators make decisions regarding SOPs for different reasons but a safety review and risk assessments should always be part of this. In this case, the reason may be that analysis of previous reports has suggested that cabin crew disarming the doors during taxi will reduce the risk of inadvertent slide deployments. Cabin crew are not permitted to leave their crew seats whilst the aircraft is moving, except when they have to complete any safety related duties. This will include the arming and disarming of the doors and securing the cabin for take-off and landing. Service related tasks that are unrelated to cabin safety must not be completed during taxi, take-off and landing. The flight crew are aware that the cabin crew are not seated as they have given the command to disarm the doors. Situational awareness is required during this time; so, cabin crew should take care when moving to disarm the doors, the same as when carrying out the safety demonstration.

During shorter turnarounds, there can be more pressure on the cabin crew to complete their tasks quickly and this could increase the chance of a slide being inadvertently deployed. Crew must always be aware of their own safety and focus on tasks being completed.

All concerns relating to an SOP should be reported via the company reporting scheme. If events and concerns are not reported, the company will be unable to conduct analysis into whether this is a frequently occurring issue and will not be aware that cabin crew are being injured. Reporting issues enables action to be taken if required to improve safety for everyone.

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## EXTENDED DUTY TIMES - CHANGES ARE NOT MADE TO ROSTERS

**Report Text:** Over the summer, delays are very common and we get our duty time extended for many different reasons (late assistance, no ground staff, remote stands, etc.). Even though we check out when finishing the duty, the Scheduling department doesn't consider the time of check out as the time that our duty ends. As a standard procedure, they consider 30 minutes after landing as finish duty time. This is not enough - it takes more than half an hour every day and this extra time is unreported.

Last week I operated a flight and we were stuck onboard waiting for assistance for 40 minutes. We were parked at one of the furthest stands from the crew room and after the debriefing we managed to leave at 00.15 local time. We stayed 25 minutes longer than our duty time post duty. It may seem like nothing but consider that it happens every day, at the end of the year it affects the total amount of duty hours considerably.

I tried to call the Scheduling department on the same day but nobody picked up. I tried to contact them via message the following day and they answered that I should call them directly. So, I called them and they told me that they won't take my word for it as I'm just cabin crew member.

**CHIRP Comment:** This report was referred to the operator for comment, who advised that the cabin crew member should contact the Scheduling department on the day to advise that their duty has been longer than planned. This should be completed with all crew present - flight crew included - as all rosters will need to be amended. We have been advised that the Scheduling department is operational 24-hours a day and contact with them should be possible at all times, however in the unlikely event that a crew member cannot get in contact via telephone, they should submit a report through the safety reporting system which can then be forwarded to them for action.

It is important that cabin crew take responsibility for notifying the company if they exceed their planned duty hours as this will affect their total duty hours at the end of the year. Each company will have a different procedure for notifying the company of extended duty periods, so it would be best to first raise this concern at the end of the duty with the SCCM and operating Captain. If required by the company procedure, the flight crew can then contact the Scheduling department to discuss changes to rosters for the cabin crew.

Rostering systems are audited both internally by the company and by the CAA, so if issues are arising where cabin crew are routinely completing extended duty periods on certain routes; it will be observed during the audit process, so long as the extended duty periods have been reported by the crew. The company will then be able to make any required changes to duty periods and rostering processes.

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## CAPTAIN ATTEMPTED TO GRANT PASSENGER ACCESS TO THE FLIGHT DECK FOR LANDING

**Report Text:** On this flight, I received a call from the Captain telling me to send a passenger into the flight deck for landing into base. At first, I thought they must have meant the forward galley. After speaking to the SCCM, I was informed that they had asked them the same which they had ignored. I was informed that the Captain did not know the passenger but the passenger knew them from school and also knew their sister.

I made it clear to the SCCM this was a breach of our policy and I was not happy with allowing anyone without a company ID pass into the flight deck and without this being cleared by ground staff. The SCCM agreed they were not comfortable with this either and told the Captain no. They questioned why they and the cabin crew were not happy with allowing this. The passenger did not enter the flight deck. The Captain apologised for putting us in this position. I was also told by one of the other cabin crew on this flight that this is very normal for them to do this.

I have not reported this to the company as I feel I would be punished for reporting but it's been on my mind ever since it happened and I worry deeply something could happen and I will regret not having reported it.

Lessons Learned - I think that the company need to be reminded that this is not allowed. A memo needs to be sent to all staff on this.

**CAA Comment:** Air carriers based overseas need to meet their own national regulatory requirements but once an aircraft registered overseas enters UK airspace, the requirements set out in the UK National Security Programme for any passengers present in the flight crew compartment to move to the cabin apply. This includes when the aircraft is on the ground with its engine running or in UK airspace, when travelling in to or out of any UK destination and any overflights. The specific regulations governing access to the flight crew compartment are contained within Chapter 10 of the UK National Aviation Security Programme.

**CHIRP Comment:** The reporter and SCCM are commended for speaking up when they had concerns, ensuring that the regulations were followed so flight safety was maintained. It was also good to see that the Captain recognised their error and apologised to the cabin crew member, which shows good CRM between all crew.

UK operators restrict the ability for passengers to visit the flight deck (where they do permit this) to when the aircraft is on the ground only. During the flight, the flight deck door should be closed and locked and should only be accessed by the operating crew. Other staff members who hold an airside ID may be able to use the flight deck jump seat for take-off and landing with some operators. However, this should only be used in accordance with company procedures and have been agreed by the operating Captain.

This report concerned a foreign operator, operating into a UK airport. Not all foreign operators have the same flight deck policies and procedures as UK operators, so there is the potential for different crew members operating on the same aircraft being accustomed to operating to different rules, with the result that innocent but actually non-compliant requests could be made. Although this should be a matter for the aircraft operator to address in the first instance, it is important for flight and cabin crew to be aware of the potential for conflicts to arise in such circumstances and be willing to challenge these when necessary.

It has been noted that the reporter felt unable to report their concerns directly to the company for fear that they would be penalised for doing so. Safety concerns must be reported wherever possible to the company to enable them to conduct the necessary investigations. Some companies also have a confidential reporting process, which may have been beneficial in a situation such as this one. The reporter could also have used the [CAA Whistle-blower system](#) to report their concerns confidentially.

The report will be passed to the company with the suggestion that a notice be issued to all flight crew reminding them of the standard procedure for flight deck access during flights.

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## PASSENGERS BOARDING THE AIRCRAFT BEFORE CABIN CREW HAVE COMPLETED THEIR SECURITY CHECKS

**Report Text:** Further to a report I submitted a number of months ago along the same lines; I would like to submit this which occurred at the same location.

We were waiting at the gate while the aircraft was being 'turned round' when a passenger approached the Captain and explained that he wanted to be a pilot. The passenger was asking lots of questions

and showing a lot of interest in the aircraft, the operation and company procedures. The Captain and FO were then given permission to board, the cabin crew were told to wait a further 20 minutes or so before the plane was ready (it was still being cleaned and catered at this point). The Captain proceeded to speak to a member of the ground staff and told them to board the interested passenger as they were going to take him on board.

You could see that the ground staff member was unsure whether they should board him or not and looked at the SCCM for confirmation. The general feeling was that 'it's the Captain's orders, what can we do?'

Two cabin crew members and I did question the SCCM, but by this point the Captain had taken the passenger on board. I explained to the SCCM and ground staff that I had experienced the same thing previously and that the advice I received from CHIRP was that NO ONE, i.e. passengers, can board the aircraft before the crew have completed their security checks. Unfortunately, the SCCM was not prepared to act and said, "it's a grey area, what can I do...?"

The SCCM did, supposedly, speak to the Captain later in the flight raising the crew's concerns - but the answer to us was "well, nothing happened, so it's not worth worrying about."

In total the passenger was on board, according to the SCCM under the Captain's supervision, for at least 20 minutes before the crew could board and start completing our security checks.

**CAA Comment:** The incident refers to an alleged infringement of security procedures. The occurrence relates to the actions of one individual, which is appropriate for the operator to address internally.

**Operator Comment:** It is stated in the Operations Manual that all security checks must be completed and verification passed to the SCCM before passengers are allowed to board the aircraft.

Cabin crew can and should challenge the Captain if they believe procedures are not being followed, especially if they believe security is being compromised.

**CHIRP Comment:** Notwithstanding the concerns that this reporter has raised, this could be a rare occurrence as we have received only two reports regarding this issue within a period of a year. However, if this is frequently occurring on flights, it is important for cabin crew to report every occurrence to the company through the company reporting programme. The company can then analyse whether the issue is occurring on a specific route or with a specific crew. Cabin crew should not be afraid to speak up and challenge the SCCM or the flight crew if they have concerns on the day, particularly where safety and security are concerned.

The passenger was under the flight crew's supervision when on the aircraft, and they would have been security screened, so the risk to security would have been low. However, the incident constituted a breach of company SOPs, so the information was referred to the operator for their investigation and it has been confirmed that the event was under internal investigation.

Such visits can be motivating for aspiring pilots but the flight crew and cabin crew must always prioritise the security of themselves and the aircraft and adhere to company SOPs at all times.

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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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