CHIRP

CABIN CREW FEEDBACK

Confidential Human-Factors Incident Reporting Programme

If it's a safety worry, report it

Under 'just safety culture' you should feel confident to highlight safety concerns/issues without fear of negative consequences

On September 30, after nearly a year and a half, the UK Government's Furlough Scheme ended. Thousands of cabin crew were re-called back to flying and for many it was, understandably, daunting to step back on an aircraft.

Moreover, for some, this first sector was allocated from standby and/or perhaps on an unfamiliar aircraft type. It's therefore more important than ever to use the resources available to you and take the time to ensure you are confident and competent to carry out your role safely by refreshing your knowledge. Due to the current volatility of the industry, there is always the possibility of aircraft swaps and roster changes, it's worth downloading cabin crew manuals to your device, so that you can access them quickly if necessary, where this is an option to

you. Also, speak to the SCCM before the briefing to let them know if you are feeling apprehensive, they might be too.

Remember if you are reporting for a duty, you are stating you are fit to operate; if you don't feel able to or feel unwell, you should not report as fit and should follow company procedures such as speaking to a Manager.

CHIRP cabin crew safety reports are now on the rise, which is to be expected as flying schedules increase. During the last 12 months, 150 were received, but only 51% of these were also reported to the company. Cabin crew should feel confident to report any safety concerns/issues without fear of any negative consequences — a *'just safety culture should see human error as a way for organisations and staff to learn and improve'*.

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For those with smaller devices, you can view this report in a single-column format. Open the newsletter in Adobe Acrobat Reader and select the 'Liquid Mode' icon in the toolbar.

This is important because CHIRP does not replace an employer's Safety Management System (SMS), and reporters should always consider using these as a first port of call if you feel able. CHIRP is completely independent from Operators and the CAA, and they can't access reports in the CHIRP system. Reporting your safety concerns/issues to your company allows them to identify potential issues so that they can monitor trends and take timely action, if necessary. Importantly, reporting should not just be limited to the things that went wrong, it also includes 'Near Miss' reporting - if you think something has the potential to cause a safety-related issue then report it.

So, what is a Safety Management System (SMS)? The CAA define a SMS as a *'a proactive and integrated approach to managing safety including the necessary organisational structures, accountabilities, policies and procedures. It is more than a manual and a set of procedures and requires safety management to be integrated into the day to day activities of the organisation. It requires the development of an organisational culture that reflects the safety policy and objectives.*

At the core of the SMS is a formal risk management process that identifies hazards and assesses and mitigates risk. It is important to recognise that even with mitigations in place, some residual risk will remain and an effective SMS will enable organisations to manage this'. All operators must have a SMS in place. An effective SMS allows the hazards and risks that could affect an operator to be identified, assessed, and prioritised so that appropriate mitigation can be put into place to reduce the risks to as low as reasonably practicable.

As the number of CHIRP safety reports increase, we are also seeing an increase in non-safety related reports, please remember that anything relating to industrial relations or T&Cs of employment should not be reported to CHIRP — our remit is solely to focus on aviation safety and we have no mandate to become involved in non-safety issues.

What can I Report?
Safety-related incidents or events involving:
- Yourself
- Other people
- Your organisation or organisations you deal with

When do I Report?
- When other reporting procedures are not appropriate or are not available
- When you wish others to benefit from an important 'Lesson Learned'
- When you are concerned to protect your identity (but note that anonymous reports are not accepted – CHIRP is confidential not anonymous)
- When you have exhausted company/regulatory reporting procedures without the issue having been addressed

What do I not Report?
- Incidents or events with no safety content
- Issues involving personality clashes
- Industrial relations and/or terms and conditions of employment problems

As the return to flying gathers pace, many people are working harder than before the pandemic. Currently fatigue-related reports from cabin crew equate to 37% of the total amount of CHIRP cabin crew safety reports received. Most of these fatigue-related reports were not reported to the operator.

Fatigue is not a new hazard and mitigations are put into place by operators which is then approved as part of the Approved FTL Scheme by the Regulator. This includes FTLs, crew complement, TU agreements, WOCL awareness (window of circadian low) etc. Fatigue reporting is a vital part of data that assists operators to pinpoint issues and trends. Most operators have a FRM (Fatigue Risk Management) programme which specifically monitors Fatigue Reports. If your company has a FRM programme, utilise it and report your fatigue.

Flying can be tiring; long days, busy flights, early reports, night flights, delays, time zone adjustments, personal issues etc can all cause tiredness and potentially fatigue, it's hard not to feel tired on day 6 especially if you are not fully rested. Individuals are responsible for arriving fit for duty, including making appropriate use of non-work periods to obtain sleep and rest. Click on this link for some tips on how to fight tiredness

Self-help tips to fight tiredness - NHS (www.nhs.uk).

Because its experience and perception are so subjective, there is no universally accepted definition of tiredness/fatigue. ICAO defines fatigue as a physiological state of reduced mental or physical performance capability resulting from sleep loss or extended wakefulness, circadian phase, or workload (mental and/or physical activity) that can impair a crew member's alertness and ability to safely operate an aircraft or perform safety-related duties.

'Flying can be tiring; long days, busy flights... It's hard not to feel tired on day 6 especially if you are not fully rested'

The stages of fatigue can be represented as in the flow chart below which shows the relationship between sleepiness and fatigue.

Sleepiness is defined by some as, 'the lack of ability to maintain a wakeful state of attention without the aid of situational factors'. Sleepiness has a simple cause and a simple cure. It occurs when people have had insufficient quality sleep and is remedied by sleep of sufficient duration and quality to replenish the sleep debt. It is acute, meaning that it is usually of short duration – a day or two – and one good episode of sleep is sufficient to replenish several recent episodes of sleep deprivation.

In contrast, fatigue might only be experienced after many weeks and months of exposure to the fatigue inducing hazards. It is often insidious in nature with people reporting signs of weariness or disease when it is too late to prevent it from happening or considerably more difficult to rectify its consequences. When it comes to the causes of fatigue in working people, work stress, shift work and physical workload are important risk factors.

All cabin crew have a responsibility to assess whether they are fit to operate before reporting for a duty and should they be ill, unrested or suffering from the effects of fatigue, they should inform their company as per their standard procedure.

Some useful background reading on safety management systems and fatigue can be found by following the links to the right.

A 'just culture': improving safety and organisational performance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

CAP 795 Safety Management Systems - Guidance to Organisations (caa.co.uk)

Cabin Crew Fatigue Management - (icao.int)

Jennifer Curran, CHIRP Cabin Crew Programme Manager
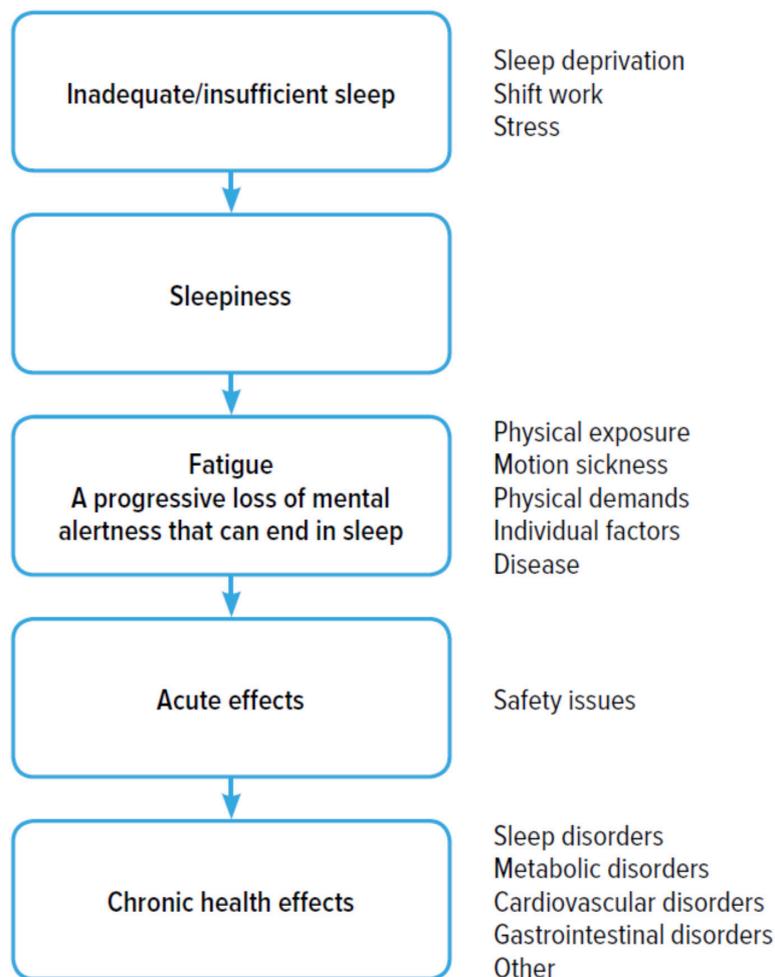
Figure 1. The relationship between sleepiness and fatigue
(Source: Jepsen et al., 2015; p.108)

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COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS FEEDBACKs

Comment No 1 – Cabin Crew FEEDBACK Ed 74 – Editorial feedback from a reader

Reference the Editorial on opening doors for ventilation, if the air conditioning is on, either from the aircraft's APU or ground-supplied conditioned air, opening doors for ventilation will negate most of the effect of the aircon. It is not possible to air condition the whole of the Mediterranean, for example. Yes, closing the doors might make it more stuffy to begin with but if the aircon is given a chance, temperatures in the cabin will be lower, coupled, as you say, with closing blinds and switchingoff unnecessary lights.

❝ CHIRP *Response* ❞

Many thanks for the feedback. The method conventionally used to supply air conditioning to a parked aircraft is the GPU or the APU. If either of these options are available, then giving the air conditioning a chance will be more effective than opening the door, like you say, 'it is not possible to air condition the whole of the Mediterranean'.

If the aircraft is parked remotely and neither GPU or APU is available please check your operator's SOPs regarding opening doors for ventilation, bearing in mind the risk of falls from height and slide deployments. It's also worth noting that no door should be opened or 'cracked' without any ground service equipment in place.

'Air conditioning will be more effective than opening the door'

BHDV REPORTING

The CHIRP Aviation Programme also provides a facility for confidential reporting of Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Victimisation (BHDV) where there is an identifiable safety-related concern. CHIRP has no specific expertise or resources to investigate BHDV reports. CHIRP's role is to aggregate data to build a picture of the prevalence of BHDV in the aviation sector. See our **BHDV page** on the CHIRP website for further information. Initially, BHDV reporting will be rolled out as a 6-month pilot-programme for Flight Crew and Cabin Crew only. The remaining sectors of aviation (ATC, Engineering, Ground Handling etc) will be included once the pilot-programme has been reviewed and any lessons incorporated (likely to be in April 2022).

NEW CHIRP FORMAT

You may notice that this latest edition is published in our new look CHIRP format, what do you think? Let us know. We very much value your inputs and comments, positive or otherwise; we recognise that there is always room for improvement, and we want to ensure that we are giving you valuable content to support and enhance safety. Please do get in touch at **mail@chirp.co.uk** and let us know what you think about this edition, or anything else (that's safety related!)

When we changed the format of FEEDBACK our intention was to make it more engaging to read with a fresh new format for print and electronic readers. We hope we've achieved this, there had to be a compromise as the three-column format makes it harder to read on a mobile device. We looked at developing an html version that would be responsive to the size of the screen that it's being viewed on but, sadly, due to resources (money!) this is not possible.

However, there is a work-around. If you open FEEDBACK in Adobe Reader (which is a free App) on a mobile device there's an option called 'Liquid Mode' that can be accessed by selecting the ink-drop symbol shown (above). Whilst not quite as pretty as the published version, this will convert the document into a single-column, indexed document that will be more readable on smaller screens. Unfortunately, Adobe have not yet rolled-out 'Liquid Mode' on its PC version so we have to ask you to bear with us until they do so in the hopefully not too distant future.

Reports

Report No.1 – Delays/ disruption to cabin crew rosters/working

Report Text: (Airline) are constantly changing and delaying the publication of cabin crew rosters. It is understandable that the global pandemic has caused disruption to flying, but the further disruption (airline) are causing to cabin crew is excessive. They have a complete reluctance to properly crew the scheduling and cabin crew roster departments.

For several months this has caused the roster publication to be significantly delayed. When they are published there is very little stability. Cabin crew are being constantly flexible. This has gone too far. (Airline) need to properly resource their planning, crewing and scheduling departments. The effect on crew has become very disruptive. This is affecting our personal and time off duty time. It is affecting crew's overall and mental health. This is completely unacceptable.

CAA Comment: Roster publication has been an issue for many operators. This is due to the travel restrictions which has led to cancellations and reinstatement of services at short notice and the planning

of staff furlough (now ended). The rationale behind the delayed publication is that if the operators published the roster on-time, it could have potentially led to further roster changes and unstable rosters. Noteworthy, that this practice should be much more controlled now.

Company Comment: The last 18 months have been incredibly challenging for the organisation and the aviation industry as a whole.We sympathise with the reporter, and all of our crews' concerns and frustrations regarding delayed roster publication, which unfortunately was a common and frequent occurrence over the last year.

We have been working on a limited flying schedule overwhelmed by government and country rules and requirements, and low passenger numbers resulting in the cancellation of services often at short notice.

At the time of the report, the volatility of flights meant roster publication had to be delayed to prevent further disruption. It was a difficult decision to make. There were two questions we asked ourselves, do we publish rosters to all the crew, then adjust them as and when the details of the flying schedule are updated? Or delay publication and wait for the next month's schedule to stabilise thus less disruption after publication? We also had to take into account that if we did publish at the agreed time, the volume of work generated by last-minute changes would have severely impacted the resources levels available in the scheduling team.

Communications were regularly relayed to the cabin crew and the trade union. If roster publication was going to fall below the 14-day period or the alternative means of compliance, then we would notify the CAA.

There was no right way to meet these challenges, even publishing a roster with just days off would have provided additional complexities elsewhere.

All of these challenges have had a tremendous impact on our schedule where only recently, and thanks to the removal of the governments' traffic

lights system, a stable schedule is now in place. We are hopeful that normal roster publication time frames will return. However, we do not underestimate Covid-19, especially when it comes to the possibility of new travel restrictions in the months ahead which could impact roster publication once again.

❝ CHIRP *Response* ❞
Given the rapidly changing international restrictions at the time, it's understandable that operators wanted to avoid publishing rosters that became obsolete before they went live. It seems that a number of options to avoid disruption were considered by this operator but the best final solution was deemed (by them) to be late publication.

Although this is a challenge and huge inconvenience to personal planning rather than a safety issue per se, such concerns can be a source of stress and distraction in themselves, and this should be acknowledged not only by operators but also prior to any flight to ensure that all crew members are in a fit state of mind to conduct operations. Unstable rostering can also cause distractions, schedules are still changing overnight, an operator's fatigue risk management programme should have processes in place to mitigate both mental and physical fatigue-related safety issues.

'I discussed with the Purser the issue of having two inexperienced crew at the back alone'

Report No.2 – Captain's authority

Report Text: I was, as a line training captain, assigned on a 4-sector training flight ending late at night. At crew briefing I was informed that the cabin crew No.1 was also under training and checking by an experienced Purser.

In this configuration the Purser would seat as No.4 close to the No.1; thus leaving the two less experienced cabin crew members seated in the rear galley as No.2 and No.3. Those two cabin crew members were considered inexperienced (having only between 10 and 20 preceding working days).

I discussed with the Purser the issue of having two inexperienced crew members at the back alone. I checked the manual, and our operator doesn't currently have any restrictions, so I then contacted operations who quite impolitely berated me for raising a non-pertinent issue, saying that the cabin is not the Captain's business. We therefore maintained the configuration with me wondering if the two at the back really understood the importance of their role.

It is company policy that the No.1 asks 3 tech questions per cabin crew member at the briefing. On this particular day, I decided to make a specific briefing to the No.2 and No.3 addressing the case of an aircraft technical failure causing communication breakdown between the front and rear galley; I also gave them a few suggestions without evaluating their technical knowledge.

I included a non-standard instruction to call the flight deck even during sterile phases of flight for anything that might have occurred. With this done, I asked the No.1 to "leave them relaxed for today" and not to ask questions. However, being under check, the No.1 apparently misinterpreted my request and still gave standard tech questions to the both of them.

The flight was uneventful but, at the end of the day, some crew members left without waiting for the Captain, which is the normal procedure. I later learned that we landed (at night) with the light at the rear galley at maximum brightness because none of the rear galley crew were able to dim the lights.

Although the event is of minimum relevance in itself, I felt that the Captain's authority as perceived by

the cabin crew and Company was much less than what I believed. I wasn't happy with this situation and even more disappointed with the Company's position. What happened in the cabin demonstrated that SOPs took precedence over a Captain's instructions; I wouldn't have minded delaying the approach while the Purser dimmed the rear galley lights, but nobody called me because of the sterile flight deck.

CAA Comment: The operator meets the regulatory requirement under AMC1 ORO.CC.100 for rostering of cabin crew with at least three months' experience. Experience should be a consideration of the SCCM when allocating working positions in order to ensure, as far as practicable, an even distribution of experience in the aircraft cabin. A robust process should be in place to manage reduced operating frequency and the effect this may have on knowledge and performance. The most significant concern regarding this report is the fact

that the Captain advised the SCCM to deviate from published procedures, for which in these circumstances there is no justification.

❝ CHIRP *Response* ❞
AMC1 ORO.CC.100 states – Number and composition of cabin crew (b) – When scheduling cabin crew for a flight, the operator should establish procedures that take account of the experience of each cabin crew member. The procedures should specify that the required cabin crew includes some cabin crew members who have at least 3 months experience as an operating crew member.

The Captain has the final authority for the operation of the aircraft at all stages of flight, but SOPs should be followed — they are there for a reason. If the No.1 under a check flight had failed to ask crew tech questions, they would not have been following the company SOPs and may have failed their check flight.

Rather than the Captain directly raising issues with the crew concerned, a conversation should have taken place between the No.1/No.4 and the Captain. A specific briefing to the rear crew members by the Captain most likely increased their nervousness. Did the rear crew members then fear contacting anyone to ask how to control the rear lights? The CABIN READY signal implies that all checks (including lighting) have been completed; this didn't appear to be the case on this sector and should have been spotted by the crew at the front of the cabin.

Many operators do have a procedure in place where they would not permit inexperienced crew to operate together in the same location of the aircraft.

Nevertheless, the Company response, if as reported, was disappointing. The Captain is at liberty to take into consideration cabin crew

experience during their threat & error management (TEM) pre departure brief, and this is recognised in the fundamental ICAO and EU regulations concerning the safe operation of aircraft.

As an aside, this was a good example of pro-active reporting by the Captain in raising an issue of concern with the operation of the flight to the controlling body. To then receive a berating and curt response from operations was counter-productive and against the ethos of a positive safety culture; hopefully the Captain will continue to raise safety concerns in the future.

Report No.3 – Crew experience

Report Text: During the briefing and establishing crew experience it was discovered that the crew were quite inexperienced. Two crew members were classed as inexperienced as they had both only completed their initial courses in early 2020 before being furloughed and had now been back flying for a couple of weeks. The third crew member was an experienced flyer with 25 years but had only recently completed conversion and therefore was very inexperienced on the aircraft.

A 4th crew member was called out due to high loads and had 8 years

flying but again had only returned from furlough in the last month with few flights. Myself had only been brought back from furlough in the last month and had done very few flights. This was an extremely difficult flight with such a lack of experience. And whilst the crew were not technically inexperienced, in real terms they were inexperienced and this made for an extremely high workload and pressure for myself and the next most experienced crew member.

CAA Comment: Cabin crew who have been absent from duty for more than six months, and recurrent training has expired, are required to receive aircraft type and operator conversion training, followed by familiarisation, before being reassigned to duties. This training should include generic and type specific normal and emergency procedures, equipment, first aid, security and dangerous goods, if required.

As a result of cabin crew being furloughed and the reduced frequency of flights, operators should ensure that training and other appropriate means are used to address risks arising from skill-fade and lack of resilience. Most operators invite feedback following completion of training and it is important to use this to enable identification of where training can be improved.

❝ CHIRP *Response* ❞

As mentioned in the previous report, AMC1 ORO.CC.100 states - Number and composition of cabin crew (b) - When scheduling cabin crew for a flight, the operator should establish procedures that take account of the experience of each cabin crew member. The procedures should specify that the required cabin crew includes some cabin crew members who have at least 3 months experience as an operating crew member.

Unlike report 2, this operator requires at least 50% of the minimum required crew to be experienced. This operator considers experience, in this context, as having more than 3 months experience as cabin crew within the last 5 years. Being new to type isn't considered being inexperienced. Although the aircraft itself may be unfamiliar SOPs remain largely consistent across an operator's fleet, cabin secure checks, safety equipment, firefighting techniques etc. the familiarity with the aircraft itself will come with time. The SCCM should allocate positions considering each crew members' experience, at this point they may decide to re-position a crew member who's defined as experienced but new to type with a crew member who's not new to type.