

CHIRP Cabin Crew FEEDBACK

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AN UPDATE ON CHIRP CABIN CREW REPORTS

2017 has been a busy year for the CHIRP Cabin Crew Programme! The number of reports submitted has more than quadrupled when compared to previous years; increasing from 242 to 1,190. We would like to thank each and every reporter who has taken the time to submit their report to CHIRP. We have ensured that each reporter received a response to their concern, especially during the large influxes of reports in March and September. These spikes in reporting related to the same concern of roster publication dates and were limited to one UK operator. They were referred to both the operator and the CAA for comment and all information received was then sent to the reporters.

Cabin crew reporting themes have remained consistent with previous years; the main subject reported being duty periods and rostering. Unfortunately because a high number of these reports could not be sufficiently disidentified, we had insufficient reports to be able to print an edition of Cabin Crew FEEDBACK at the end of 2017. It is however encouraging to see that we have continued to receive a high number of reports throughout the year, despite no current edition of FEEDBACK being circulated to cabin crew around the UK.

We have noted that in a high number of cases, the concerns raised with CHIRP have either not been discussed with the company rostering department or the reporter did not know that they should report this to their company first before speaking to CHIRP. As CHIRP is not affiliated with UK operators, trade unions or the CAA, we unfortunately do not have the ability to check or make changes to rosters or to conduct investigations. So any issues with rosters where a cabin crew member has not been rostered sufficient days off during a roster period should be reported directly to the rostering department (or appropriate department for your company) and also via the company reporting scheme as soon as the roster has been issued. By checking rosters thoroughly when they are issued, any irregularities can be passed to the relevant department to be rectified as soon as possible.

We welcome reports from cabin crew regarding safety related incidents involving themselves, other crew members or the company that they work for that inform us of errors, individual performance, regulatory issues and unsafe working practices. Unfortunately we cannot accept reports regarding incidents with no safety content, conflicts of personalities, industrial relations issues or queries about terms and conditions of contracts. These reports should be directed to your company and/or your trade union (if your company is represented by a trade union).

As well as reporting rostering concerns to CHIRP, cabin crew can also submit reports to the relevant national regulatory authority (in the UK the CAA) and EASA; if the concerns relate to EASA FTLs. To submit a report via the EASA Confidential Safety Reporting Programme, please visit <https://www.easa.europa.eu/confidential-safety-reporting>

This is important as EASA will be reviewing the effectiveness of the current regulations concerning flight and duty limitations and rest requirements during 2019. The review will involve scientific expertise and be based on operational data. A draft NPA (Notice of Proposed Amendment) will be released for public consultation where anyone is able to comment online. These comments will then be processed into a second document with a reviewed proposal (CRD or Comment Response Document) which is then sent to the European Commission to be discussed and approved. Throughout this process, data and expertise is gathered to substantiate the changes but it is primarily during the drafting of the NPA that the majority of the work is completed. CHIRP has asked to be contacted closer to the time of the review so that we can pass on the concerns that have been raised through the programme. It would be helpful for EASA to see evidence of tiring rosters and to read the opinions of the cabin crew who are operating the rosters, so please use the above link to submit your concerns.

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THE USE OF INFLIGHT REST TO EXTEND A DUTY PERIOD

Over the past few months, CHIRP has received a number of queries from cabin crew members relating to inflight rest periods and the type of rest that has been allocated during a duty. In a number of cases, the reporter has been confused as to why bunk rest has not been scheduled during the duty and why they have instead been allocated rest in a passenger seat.

For an operator to be able to extend a cabin crew member's flight duty period to complete a long range flight, inflight rest should be allocated during the duty. The length of the flight duty period and the time of day that the crew member reports for the duty will determine how long the rest period is and what type of rest facilities need to be provided.

Inflight rest facilities in accordance with ORO.FTL.205 (e) (iii) should fulfil the following minimum standards:

Class 1 rest facility means a bunk or other surface that allows for a flat or near flat sleeping position. It reclines to at least 80 degrees back angle to the vertical and is located separately from both the flight crew compartment and the passenger cabin in an area that allows the crew member to control light and provides isolation from noise and disturbance.

Class 2 rest facility means a seat in an aircraft cabin that reclines at least 45 degrees back angle to the vertical, has at least a pitch of 55 inches (137.5 cm), a seat width of at least 20 inches (50 cm) and provides leg and foot support. It is separated from the passengers by at least a curtain to provide darkness and some sound mitigation and is reasonably free from disturbance by passengers or crew members.

Class 3 rest facility means a seat in an aircraft cabin or flight crew compartment that reclines at least 40 degrees from the vertical, provides leg and foot support and is separated from passengers by at least a curtain to provide darkness and some sound mitigation and is not adjacent to any seat occupied by passengers.

Inflight rest requirements for each type of in-flight rest facility available are detailed within the company Operations Manual and are based on the FTL regulations and approved by the CAA. If what is being provided during a duty does not meet the requirements as stipulated in the company Operations Manual, this should be reported to the company in the first instance through the company reporting programme. It should then be investigated by the company to ensure that all crew members are receiving the rest that is required during a duty period.

It is worth noting that there is a responsibility on each crew member to know the maximum FDP that they can complete plus discretion and if they are unsure of what they can complete, they can query this with the Captain, SCCM or the Scheduling Department.

Stephanie Dykes
Cabin Crew Programme Manager

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COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CABIN CREW AND FLIGHT CREW

Report Text: During a recent trip, the Captain refused to speak to any other cabin crew member apart from the SCCM. Whilst I was talking to the Captain when downroute, they walked off in the middle of the conversation. This continued onboard the aircraft with the Captain walking around the aircraft during flight not talking to any of the cabin crew members, apart from the SCCM. When trying to talk to the Captain, they made it impossible by simply walking away. This also happened on the crew bus from the aircraft after the flight, where the Captain rushed off when approached by a crew member.

The Captain later informed me and some other crew members that they thought we had not communicated well enough with them, this was again done through the SCCM rather than to us directly, even though they

said it did not have anything to do with the operation. The Captain referred to this as the appropriate chain of command.

Lessons Learned - The chain of command at our company creates a very big division between cabin crew and flight crew, especially in cases like this when the Captain refuses to talk directly to cabin crew and claims it is appropriate chain of command. I feel that this could be very dangerous in an emergency situation as cabin crew are made to feel subordinate to the Captain and are not allowed to speak to them. This culture is very worrying and could potentially be dangerous.

Some flight crew need to realise that they may be higher in the chain of command when operating the aircraft but that this does not apply in social situations.

CHIRP Comment: Poor communication between cabin crew and flight crew can limit the flow of safety critical information which could prevent an accident or incident from occurring. In some of the reports that CHIRP has received discussing concerns relating to CRM and general communication, the reporters have stated that they have either felt unable to approach the flight crew to raise their concerns or to introduce themselves. Introductions at the beginning of a duty or the start of a trip are essential to effective teamwork. Some UK operators have separate pre-flight briefings for cabin crew and flight crew which can limit the amount of time before a flight departs for them to introduce themselves. If this is the case, when both the flight crew and the cabin crew meet at the aircraft for the flight, a quick hello should suffice.

We have printed reports in previous editions of Cabin Crew FEEDBACK which are similar to the one above and we have reiterated in the CHIRP comments that there should be some understanding of the variable nature of the workload for both the flight crew and cabin crew throughout a duty period. Both parties are busy at different points of the flight and it is obvious from the reports that we have received, that there have been misunderstandings because of this. By working together and communicating effectively, it is easier to solve problems. Everyone has a different perspective on a situation, this should always be considered.

The reporter has questioned the 'chain of command' and how they feel that this has caused problems during the flight in question. The Captain is the Commander of the aircraft and it is their responsibility to ensure the safety of the aircraft, passengers and their crew whilst they are onboard the aircraft. They will make the overall decisions regarding any abnormal or emergency situation that may occur and whether a diversion is needed. The SCCM will be in charge of the cabin and the passenger service. If there is an obvious emergency which could affect the safe operation of the flight, any crew member should be able to report directly to the Captain. The chain of command does not include crew free time downroute on a trip and when the crew are socialising. This could create a divide between the flight crew and cabin crew and could cause the communication to breakdown during a flight.

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NO AIR-CONDITIONING ONBOARD

Report Text: I reported for a charter flight to a destination in southern Europe. Among several other flight specifications, we were rostered to land at 09:00 GMT to drop off the outgoing passengers and not take off again until 12:15 GMT in order to bring back the returning passengers. This meant a 03h15m turnaround. We were not allowed to leave the aircraft to spend time in the airport terminal.

The temperature outside (as per my iPhone app) was 34 degrees Celsius although it felt a lot hotter inside the aircraft cabin as the air conditioning had been turned off. We immediately raised the temperature issue with the SCCM who spoke to the Captain. Their first suggestion was to keep the front left and rear left doors open in order to create ventilation and also to shut all right-hand-side window blinds, which the crew agreed to do. Once the cleaners had left the aircraft, the crew agreed that the little air blowing into the cabin from outside was hot air and we might be better off closing the aircraft doors. The SCCM agreed and authorised this. We were relying solely on air vents blowing warm air.

Within minutes we realised that this had not made it any more comfortable for us and that the next 3 hours would be very hard to bear. We again spoke to the SCCM who understood and shared our concerns. They contacted the Captain who informed us that they could not turn the air conditioning back on as the company would be fined. At this point, some of the crew had already removed uniform items in order to cool ourselves down a bit. Neither the ground power nor the aircraft's own power were switched on at this point.

As the time went by, the crew felt hotter and hotter and became angry that we were not being looked after. The Captain was contacted at least 3 times and every time they refused to turn the air conditioning on. They maintained that this was due to not only the company policy but also Airport rules. Interestingly, the week before I had talked to another Captain about this and their position was that the cabin could not go

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above a certain temperature for reasons of Health & Safety. I then spoke to a different Captain the day after this incident and again was told that the crew had not been looked after as expected by the Commander.

After 3 hours on the ground, we started to board the flight and the air conditioning was finally turned on, but not until boarding started. Unfortunately, the temperature inside the cabin had reached such height that the air conditioning was not coping with the [circa 200] passengers boarding. Almost an hour later, with all passengers sitting on board and ready for take-off, many passengers and crew were still fanning themselves with safety cards, newspapers and magazines in order to cool themselves down and many passengers complained of unsafe temperatures on board. It wasn't until after take-off that the cabin finally started to cool down.

Even more worryingly, this is not an isolated incident but instead company policy for the last 2 or 3 years in order to save fuel and this is discussed daily with pilots. Some days the Captain on the day decides to keep the crew and passengers safe and comfortable but other days the Captain decides to save fuel and let the cabin temperature rise to unsafe and uncomfortable levels.

No crew member seems to know the definite rule regarding safe cabin temperature levels. All cabin crew members were in agreement that we were not treated well or looked after.

Lessons Learned - No lessons were learned as a result of the incident. My only suggestion is that crew members be treated as human beings.

Company Comment: The outside air temperature was 34C. On arrival there was a lack of ground staff, disembarkation was slow and probably not finished until a good 40 mins after arrival. Ground power also took at least 30-40 mins to organise even though it was parked on a remote stand.

The Captain asked the crew to close all the window blinds on the right side of the aircraft soon after arrival. At no point during the turnaround was the aircraft not powered. The Captain also requested ground air conditioning with the dispatcher shortly after arrival, it arrived at the aircraft side over an hour after arrival and was connected and switched on within about 15mins.

Steps had been connected to doors 2L and 4L, after the cleaners had finished and with the APU still running the Captain walked to the back of the aircraft. The cabin was warm approx. 28° (the APU on this aircraft wasn't a particularly good one). They spoke with the cabin crew about how best to cool the cabin, and recommended that the rear door be closed. Their initial reaction was that they wanted to have a breeze flowing through the cabin, they mentioned that a 34° breeze was not helping to cool the cabin and it would be better to close all doors on the aircraft during the extended turnaround.

When the APU was turned off approximately 75mins after arrival, it had been maintaining a cabin temp between 27° and 28°, ground air conditioning was used instead. During this time the SCCM had spoken to the Captain once about the uncomfortable conditions. The Captain informed the SCCM that they were doing their utmost to keep the cabin cool but they would not be starting the APU at this time, but would switch it back on before passengers boarded. The ground air was disconnected and the APU started around 15 mins before passengers boarded. At no time was the aircraft without power or APU/ground air conditioning during the turnaround, the total time the ground air was in use was 60mins.

Unfortunately an early request to be able to spend the turnaround inside the terminal was refused by the [Company] station manager apparently due to security issues.

CHIRP Comment: The above report was submitted to CHIRP during the summer and was passed to the company for comment. The company provided more information on the event in question which helped to identify why some of the issues were caused. This information was also passed back to the reporter. We elected to include this report in the January edition of Air Transport FEEDBACK as the report involved both flight crew and cabin crew.

High temperatures can affect crew performance and contribute to poor behaviour by passengers. The Captain found himself in a difficult position; the aircraft was on a remote stand on a very hot day with no wind and a long wait before the passengers arrived for the flight home. Opening the aircraft cabin doors was unlikely to assist in cooling the cabin in these circumstances and, while it is not uncommon for crews to be required to remain on board, it is unclear if there were genuine security issues preventing the crew from disembarking the aircraft or who had the authority to make the decision. The provision of ground equipment and services is a contractual issue and unless aircraft Commanders have visibility of the contract provisions they are unable to insist on compliance. It would be good practice for operators to make this information readily available to aircraft Commanders for any destination they are required to use.

Following on from the previous report discussing CRM, this report also highlights a possible breakdown in communication but this time between management back at base, the ground staff at the destination airport and the flight and cabin crew. The cabin crew were not aware before they departed from base that they would not be able to spend the extended turnaround in the terminal building. If they had known, they may have been able to prepare themselves for the high temperatures and ask the company for more supplies to be loaded onto the aircraft such as extra bottles of water.

As mentioned above, the Captain was put in a difficult situation but tried their best to ensure that the cabin crew were kept informed throughout the turnaround and that all possible was done to try and cool the cabin down. They acted in the best interests of the entire crew and managed the situation as well as they could.

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MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE, POOR TRAINING AND STANDARDS

Report Text: I took over a flight where the inbound SCCM told me that they had administered therapeutic oxygen for the duration of the flight to a sick passenger. (The passenger was taken from the aircraft in a wheelchair as we had this discussion.) The SCCM said one whole oxygen bottle had been used, told me which one as it would need replacing and then disembarked.

When I went to carry out my pre-flight checks, I found the said oxygen bottle to be totally full. I queried it with the Captain who was operating both sectors and they confirmed which oxygen bottle they had been informed had been used and it was the same one. Basically the crew hadn't even turned it on and I can only presume that the passenger sat for the whole flight with an oxygen masked strapped to them with no oxygen flowing - the consequences of which could have been far more serious.

Obviously I checked all the other bottles on board to see if there had been a mix up and also checked the tech log entry which categorically stated that the said bottle was 'now completely empty' when the reality was that it was still completely full. The Captain and I also attached a new oxygen mask to check its functionality and it worked perfectly. All of the cabin crew on the previous flight failed to check that the oxygen was being delivered successfully, obviously assuming that it was when indeed, it hadn't been turned on.

I reported this to management but was met with very little concern, hence my report to CHIRP.

Lessons Learned - Vast inexperience prevails and this incident highlights exactly this. Better training is something that needs looking into.

CHIRP Comment: The reporter highlighted this issue to management at the time of the event and it was understood that the manager would then discuss the concerns raised directly with the SCCM on the previous flight. As it was reported to management at the time, the reporter thought that this would be sufficient and did not submit an incident report to the company. However, when CHIRP raised the issue with the Company, it turned out that the manager had not followed up on the incident. The Company then began an investigation and thanked the reporter for bringing this to their attention. Regardless of whether an incident has been reported to management, an incident report should always be completed with the company to ensure that a thorough investigation is conducted.

The reporter is commended for carrying out the pre-flight checks and follow-up investigation so diligently. Pre-flight checks are conducted to ensure that the aircraft has the correct amount of equipment and that it is serviceable before departure. If equipment is not sufficient in quantity or is unserviceable, this should be raised with the Captain and Engineering department before the flight departs. These items should also be recorded in the cabin defects log by the operating SCCM.

All cabin crew are trained to the same standard during initial and recurrent training, which includes first aid training and the use of all safety equipment. A crew member must be checked on the use of equipment before successfully completing their training, so all of the crew including the SCCM should have been able to identify that the oxygen was not flowing through the mask. By checking the flow indicator, the crew member operating the equipment would be able to see if oxygen was flowing or not.

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REPORTED SICK AS NOT RESTED FOR DUTY

Report Text: I commenced duty downroute at 1020Z after a night stop. We arrived at the airport and departed late due to a security incident and flow rate restrictions. We had a 45 minute comfort break back at base before reporting at 1415z for a late 2 sector duty. This departed at 1618z, 48 mins late due to airfield congestion. We landed at 1800z, 1h5m late due to snow and then departed at 1910Z. We landed back at base at 2036Z, clearing at 2106Z (the original planned clear time was 1935z).

I then had a duty rostered at 0910z the following morning, giving me 12h4m rest, but as a commuter to Portsmouth (well within our required radius) I was not home until 2230. Following time for personal needs once home and some sleep, I did not feel adequately rested before my report, so I phoned in sick on the advice of management. The managers did try and help overnight by either adjusting or looking for a later duty, but were not able to due to low availability of standby crews.

Lessons Learned - 12 hours between two reports, after a long duty day is simply not adequate enough. Commuting time and time for personal needs must be taken in to account at base, as it is when downroute in hotels when night stopping. More flexibility in our scheduling should allow for when things go off schedule so that rest is not disrupted.

CHIRP Comment: As we have advised above in this edition of Cabin Crew FEEDBACK, we receive a high number of reports from cabin crew discussing roster concerns. Many of these reporters have expressed concerns relating to possible fatigue and the perceived pressure to continue flying rather than reporting fatigue to the company. In some cases, the reporter has stated that they have a lack of confidence in the fatigue reporting system as they have reported before and it has been deemed after an investigation that they were not suffering from fatigue. Because of this, they have then chosen to either continue flying or have called in sick for a duty to be able to rest – as described in the situation detailed above.

EASA FTLs do not account for the commuting time to and from a duty, it is the personal choice of the crew member to decide where they live and whether they commute on the day of the duty or not. EASA FTL GM1 CS FTL.1.200 Home Base states that crew members should consider making arrangements for temporary accommodation closer to their home base if the travelling time from their residence to their home base usually exceeds 90 minutes. Some operators may stipulate that crew members should live within a specified distance of their home base. It is then the responsibility of the crew member to ensure that they comply with this request and if necessary, find temporary accommodation closer to their place of work to ensure that they are adequately rested before undertaking a duty.

By calling in sick, the company will not have a true view of fatigue and cannot therefore conduct accurate analysis. They need to see fatigue being reported through the company reporting system, which in turn assists the CAA in fatigue report monitoring. CHIRP is receiving a high number of reports on certain roster patterns and the effects of fatigue but UK operators do not have access to this information as we are not affiliated with them and therefore these cannot be used in their analysis. There can also be negative effects on the crew member from calling in sick, such as a higher sickness record or in some cases, receiving less pay at the end of the month.

Cabin crew should not be put off by a company investigation after reporting fatigue – this is essential in identifying whether rosters are causing fatigue or whether there may be an underlying issue not previously known to the company or the crew member. Each company will have a different process for investigating suspected fatigue but in most cases, rosters will be analysed by the company so that they can accurately determine whether the crew member is fatigued or not. The cabin crew member should however include as much information as possible in their fatigue report about their rest patterns and daily life. If after an investigation has been concluded by a company a crew member is not satisfied with the outcome, they can choose to dispute the decision and should contact their trade union (if the company is represented by a trade union) for advice.

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POOR SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENTS (NON-UK OPERATOR)

Report Text: Having flown several times on charter flights with one company over the last two years, I have noticed that the intelligibility of cabin crew announcements has been deteriorating to the state that they are useless. This particularly pertains to the pre-flight safety briefing, but also affects announcements about leaving seat belts fastened, etc.

The announcements appear to be read by someone that does not fully understand what they are reading, are heavily accented with poor pronunciation and delivery. These combined with the high background noise and PA system distortion to produce an announcement that I would defy anyone to understand. It was noticeable that passengers conversation noise increased markedly as their attention waned. I am concerned that first time flyers would have not known the emergency procedures.

CHIRP Comment: As well as receiving reports from cabin crew, flight crew, engineers and air traffic controllers, CHIRP also accepts reports from members of the travelling public. This report has been submitted by a passenger who was travelling on a non UK airline but from a UK airport and it was passed to the relevant national regulatory authority for their information.

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The airline in question has a majority of non-English speaking crew members which could be why there was poor pronunciation and delivery of the briefing.

A safety demonstration or announcement must be made to all passengers before an aircraft departs. This is normally conducted during taxi. Regulations do not specify how an airline should deliver a briefing but that they must ensure that all passengers are orally briefed before each take-off. Depending on the systems available on that aircraft type, this briefing can be conducted by recorded video and verbal announcement with crew members present in the cabin or manually by crew members in the cabin and accompanied by verbal instructions. If completed verbally, the instructions should always be clear and concise so that all passengers are aware of the safety information of the aircraft. If for some reason a pre-recorded video and announcement should fail part way, a manual and verbal demonstration should be completed.

It is normally best practice for a verbal safety announcement to be made when an aircraft departs from a different country with a majority of passengers who do not speak the language of the operator. However, there is no EASA requirement to conduct the briefing other than in the stated 'common language/s' of the operator.

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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. To ensure your confidentiality, please submit your report from a personal email address.

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