

CALLBACK

ASRS

From NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System

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Cabin Crew Reports from 1997

In 1997 ASRS introduced two new reporting forms, for maintenance and cabin crew personnel. This month we share some of the reports ASRS has received involving cabin crew. A disturbing number of these described serious incidents of passenger misconduct and abuse of crew members. Our first few report excerpts involve that seat of many passenger transgressions—the lavatory.

Booze and Blues

In the following incident, the passenger in question appeared to be fine during boarding, but trouble began after he awakened from a nap:

■ *About 45-50 minutes after takeoff, we had a passenger who was sleeping, wake up screaming and pointing at no one. He locked himself in the aft lavatory and started to bang on the walls and continued to scream. I opened the door and told him his behavior was not appropriate nor would it be tolerated. He told me to go away or he would kill me! The crew figured he was drunk and searched his bags*

where we found a big bottle of [whiskey]. He was not served liquor on board. We finally got him out of the lavatory—we were fearful he would hurt himself in there. We had a minister who asked to help because the passenger was crying and upset about something. The passenger over the next hour became more belligerent and then violent—the passenger hit both myself and the #3 Flight Attendant, threatening to kill us several times. The First Officer helped us to restrain the passenger. He received similar threats and...the minister who helped us was punched in the face, again with the threats.

Because of the time of night, both myself and the #3 Flight Attendant were able to spend time trying to contain this passenger. We both had to suspend our normal duties including our normal jumpseats for landing. I feel other passengers were upset and fearful. We were met by police and the passenger was removed.

ASRS learned from a callback to several cabin crew members who reported this incident that a company report was filed about the disturbance. The FBI also investigated the incident, and a crew member pressed charges against the disruptive passenger.

Bodies Double

■ *I was working First Class Galley. The flight was oversold and the agents were very concerned about an "on time" departure. We had one additional crew member deadheading and one extra cabin attendant deadheading. It was after the seat belt sign came off that our extra cabin attendant deadheading came up and told us we had a stowaway in the aft lavatory. We had a briefing with the Captain and the additional crew members... The Captain made radio contact and we continued on to destination...*

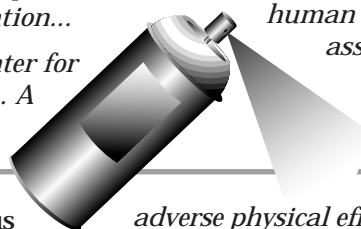
[The stowaway] was just out of a rehabilitation center for drugs... His eyes were dilated and he was nervous... A

deadheading Captain and another pilot watched the stowaway during our service and kept him occupied. I kept him out of First Class and the cockpit. We "parked" a crew member near him at all times. We kept him in the rear of the aircraft for landing and during deplaning until the proper people could remove him... Since boarding cards are no longer checked, and an "on time" departure is so important—it puts pressure on everyone—rushing can lead to human error... In the future, someone should be assigned to check lavatories prior to closing of the door.

Three Pints High

A flight crew reported that the discovery of hazardous materials ("hazmat") carried on board by a passenger caused them to do some soul-searching afterwards about their handling of the incident.

■ *[From the Captain's report] Flight Attendant notified us of a passenger who had brought aboard 3 pint cans of acetone-based paint, one of which leaked to some extent inside his carry-on bag. The Flight Attendant mentioned a "nail polish remover" odor, and the passenger said, "Oh! that must be my bag." Inspection of his bag indicated a small amount of paint had seeped from the can to the inside of the bag. The Flight Attendant secured all 3 cans in protective plastic bags. The odor went away and there were no reports of any passenger either noticing the odor or experiencing*



adverse physical effects. Company procedure for a paint or flammable liquid spill calls for notification of ATC, Fire/Rescue resources, Hazmat response teams, and station personnel. Since the situation was quickly discovered, and completely and thoroughly met by the Flight Attendant, the First Officer and I concluded that to activate such resources was not justified... I feel this situation served as a warning to us all to at least reexamine the effectiveness of passenger screening...

[From the First Officer's report] No matter how minimal a hazard our situation appeared to be, we may have neglected to take the most serious precautions necessary to protect the safety of our flight. I feel that there is not enough education of the public on hazmat and air travel. ▲

ASRS Recently Issued Alerts On...

False localizer signal at a Central American airport
Failure of all three pitot-static systems on an MD-11
B757-200 hydraulic leak restricting wing flap movement
Armed passenger undetected by a Texas airport's gate security
FK10 fuel cross-feed problem due to circuit breaker malfunction

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Air Carrier Pilots	2017
General Aviation Pilots	637
Controllers	54
Cabin/Mechanics/Military/Other	69
TOTAL	2777

<http://olias.arc.nasa.gov/asrs>

Aerial and Ground Ice Capades

Ice can take its toll on aircraft on the ground and in the air, leading to less-than-satisfactory conclusions to planned flights. A Part 135 cargo pilot reports that a fast approach and a short, icy runway is not a good combination.

■ *I was prepared for and cleared for a straight-in approach. I didn't break out until over the airport, so I requested to circle, but I botched the request. I wanted the long runway, 21R, but requested 21L and accepted the clearance to land there. It was only 3,000 feet long. I didn't bleed off [my airspeed] due to icing and a lower-than-normal glide path. So I landed 700-800 feet down the runway, and although I used maximum braking, I slid off the end of the runway. I didn't get stuck and no damage was done...*

I briefed myself for an approach to the long runway, then accidentally switched, spur of the moment, to a short runway. Bad choice.

Another Part 135 cargo flight, this time in a corporate jet, encountered ice problems in-flight, and endured a much more costly incident. The Captain reports:

■ *On our descent through 12,000 down to 6,000 feet, we picked up moderate-to-severe icing. Icing equipment was on, nacelles heat on, wings and stabilizer heat on. We did a missed approach, and picked up more icing to about 12,000 feet. Leveling, both engines flamed out within about five seconds of each other. It took two minutes to restart them. We proceeded to our alternate airport.*

Most likely cause was ice ingestion. [Maintenance] replaced the right engine—bent blades on the first stage [compressor]—and “dressed up” the left engine—several nicks.

Each aircraft type has its own icing characteristics, but most require the anti-ice equipment to be turned on **before** encountering icing. Ice that adheres to some unprotected sections of the aircraft may shed suddenly, as was apparently the case in this incident. Ice may also persist long after the aircraft has departed icing conditions. ▲



Not Quite Enough...

Well before an aircraft leaves the ground, icing needs to be given serious consideration. An air carrier Captain tells how long delays for weather, resultant schedule pressure, a nighttime departure, and a possibly inadequately-trained ground crew combined to set the stage for a potential icing disaster—averted by two sharp-eyed passengers.

■ *We had waited for threshold deicing for 3.5 hours. I told the deicer that I wanted the entire aircraft deiced and the engine inlets checked for contamination. After about 20 minutes, the deicer returned to the interphone to advise me that the aircraft was clean. After starting the left engine, I was called by one of the Flight Attendants, and was told that a passenger as well as a deadheading Flight Attendant had noticed that the wings were still covered with snow and ice. We shut down the engine, and recalled the deicer...to respray the wings. I also had the First Officer perform a cabin inspection, and he also confirmed that the inboard third and aft half of the left wing contained large areas of snow and ice. It is apparent that standard phraseology of “Your aircraft is clean” does not insure the level of safety required.*

Had it not been for an observant flight attendant and passenger, our takeoff might have been jeopardized.

The First Officer's report concludes that standard procedure should include a visual inspection of the aircraft by a cockpit crew member after the deicing process. Although it is not a requirement, many pilots already follow this sage advice.

...And Way Too Much

A pilot reports that her small twin-engine aircraft was deiced prior to takeoff on a snowy IMC day, but that the deicing process created a whole new problem.

■ *Preflight and before-takeoff checks all normal. Only thing out of the ordinary (or not so out of the ordinary for this aircraft) was that the heater would not ignite while holding short of the runway, and it had while [repositioning earlier]. Radio reception caused me to ask how Tower heard me. Their readback was loud and clear, so I assumed all was normal, perhaps just my position or this particular radio.*

After becoming airborne, I did not receive any further radio transmissions. I tested both radios—nothing. I began a turn back towards the airport, but had lost sight of it, so began the lost communications procedure for the XYZ Departure. Then I noticed no navigation equipment. I went to squawk 7700 and noticed no transponder. Then I looked and saw no electrical. Big problem because of lack of familiarity [with the area]. [After circling], I relocated the field and landed. I followed the airport manager [to taxi] back to base.

Postflight inspection found excessive amounts of deicing fluid everywhere—alternators, aft compartment where battery is located, engine nacelles, etc.

It was later determined that more than 76 gallons of deicing fluid had been used to deice the aircraft. The initial heater and radio problems were ignored because the aircraft had some history of electrical “glitches,” but the reporter states that such glitches will not be ignored in the future. ▲