

2 Pre-flight

Background

After cabin crew log their arrival time at the operations office, they fill in necessary documentation such as customs, immigration, and log timing sheets. They then meet the Flight supervisor (Purser, Chief cabin crew member), captain, and other members of their crew.

Before a plane is ready to be boarded, checks need to be carried out and meetings held between flight crew and cabin crew, and then between the Chief cabin crew member and cabin crew. There may also be other briefings during the flight, before each period of duty and also during emergencies. In most countries, these meetings are compulsory and are required under national aviation authority regulations.

The aim is to make sure there is a common understanding between all crew members. Teamwork, good communication, and planning are emphasized. Many cabin crew and flight crew have to work closely with colleagues they may not have met before for extended periods and it is important to quickly establish synergy. A briefing usually aims to encourage interactive communication between all crew members and includes questions from crew members and an exchange of information. There is an emphasis on the principles of Crew Resource Management (CRM) to ensure that the crew works as an effective team. Briefings are held in a designated room or aboard the aircraft and the time they last depends on the number of the crew and the specifics of the aircraft.

The flight crew to cabin crew pre-flight briefing will usually include the en-route weather, the estimated flight time, information on any unusual situations, cockpit entry procedure, emergency and communication procedures, and anything that the flight crew or the cabin crews need to discuss related to the flight, (e.g. special cargo, flight crew meals, etc.).

After this the Purser will lead the cabin crew briefing. The briefing is addressed to all cabin crew members and will highlight any specifics of the particular flight. It may start with introductions, especially if the crew do not know each other. It will then include details of the particular flight (the flight number, destination(s), departure time, estimated time of arrival, aircraft registration, etc.). It will also include any special information, such as number of passengers and any special requirements for passengers or maintenance issues that may affect the flight. The Purser will define responsibilities for the flight and will often ask safety related questions to ensure that each crew member is aware of what is expected in specific situations in their designated position on-board the aircraft. There will also be a review of the operating procedures to ensure that the cabin crew understands the importance of carrying out their duties in accordance with the Operator's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and emergency procedures. It is part of the briefing to provide the cabin crew members with the chance to ask questions to clarify any details.

When the cabin crew members board the aircraft they go to their assigned stations. After stowing away their baggage, they perform an emergency equipment check at their crew station. The cabin crew is responsible for checking the emergency equipment at their station, in lavatories, in overhead bins, in cupboards, and under seats. It is the cabin crew's responsibility to write all discrepancies on the Emergency Equipment Checklist. The assigned cabin crew member then ensures that all catering items, food, dry goods, bars, and duty-free are on-board and are stowed in their appropriate places before passengers arrive. The cabin crew member responsible for the galleys counts passenger meals and crew meals,

and advises the Senior cabin crew member. The cabin crew is responsible for ensuring the cabin is safe for take-off. Security checks will also be done under seats, in seat pockets, in overhead bins and compartments, in magazine racks and in the crew seat area. This will also be carried out in waste bins, galley lockers and in the trolleys, as well as all areas of the toilets. Any suspicious items are reported to the Senior cabin crew member.

Jargon Buster

PSU Passenger Service Unit. This is situated above each seat row in the overhead panel above the passenger seats in the cabin. A PSU contains reading lights, loudspeakers, illuminated signs, and automatically deployed oxygen masks and also louvres providing conditioned air.

comfort kits This is given (often in the form of a pouch) to long-haul passengers on most airlines. It usually contains cabin socks, earphones, earplugs, and an eye mask. They may also contain an inflatable pillow and a toothbrush and paste. The contents vary from airline to airline and are more elaborate in business and first class.

headwind A wind blowing directly against the course of an aircraft (or any vehicle).

door names Doors on an aircraft are given specific names in order to make communication more efficient between cabin crew members. They are referred to with a number followed by R (right) or L (left), e.g. 3L, 2R. Doors are numbered from front to back and some of the doors will be designated emergency exits.

CRM A procedure and training system originating from NASA workshop in 1979, which found that the primary cause of most aviation accidents was human error. It emphasizes interpersonal communication, leadership, and decision making.

Activity Assistant

20 While monitoring this activity, encourage students to use some of the following sentences and phrases. Some students may wish to experiment with the more complex ones. This could be done in several ways:

- 1 by putting the phrases on cards which students spread out on the desk, sorting them according to the situation.
- 2 by writing the phrases on the board before each situation is practised.
- 3 by eliciting the phrases from students with prompts from the teacher or
- 4 a combination of the above where the easier phrases are elicited from students and written on the board and the more complex ones handed out on cards.

Situation 1

I'm sorry. There were a few bits of information I didn't catch. What's the departure time?

Which gate does the plane leave from? How long is the flight?

I'm not sure I heard the departure time correctly? Which gate is it and how long is the flight?

Did he/she say 12.30 or 2.30?

Was that Gate Number 40 or 14?

I didn't hear that. Was that or ?

Situation 2

*(All passengers must receive a standard safety briefing. An air operator must ensure its staff provides an **individual** safety briefing when the contents of the standard safety briefing are insufficient because of a passenger's sensory, physical or comprehension limitations or if the passenger is responsible for another person)*

Can I ask you a few questions?

I need to ask you a few questions.

How old are you?

Can you tell me how old you are?

Can you read this for me?

Can I just check the times of my duties again, please?

Can we go through the times of today's duties again, please?

Would you mind going through the times of my duties today again? Thanks.

Situation 3

I'm sorry. I didn't catch that.

Could you repeat that for me, please?

I'm sorry. I didn't hear what you said.

Can I just check if you have your boarding card with you?

Do you have your boarding card with you, (sir/madam)?

Situation 4

Can I just check the times of my duties again, please?

Can we go through the times of my duties for the flight again, please?

Would you mind going through the times of my duties today again? Thanks