

R4 15/11/10

Mr Robert Gifford
Executive Director
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25 October 2010

Dear Mr Gifford

Thank you for your letter of 4 October 2010 in which you seek clarification from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regarding a number of matters related to the loading of hand baggage in aircraft overhead bins.

The placard weight shown in each cabin overhead bin is a limit set as part of the certification of the aircraft. It would have been demonstrated that the overhead bin can be loaded to that particular weight and still meet various requirements including withstanding deceleration forces. We would expect operators to have procedures in place to ensure that the overhead bin placard weights are not exceeded.

The responsibilities on aeroplane commercial air transport operators with regard to carry-on baggage are detailed in European Commission Regulation (EC) No 859/2008, commonly known as EU-OPS. These responsibilities are summarised below:

- EU-OPS 1.270 requires that an operator shall establish procedures to ensure that only such hand baggage is taken into the passenger cabin as can be adequately and securely stowed and that all baggage and cargo on board, which might cause injury or damage, or obstruct aisles and exits if displaced, is placed in stowages designed to prevent movement.

The Appendix to EU-OPS 1.270 specifically requires that procedures established by an operator to ensure that hand baggage and cargo is adequately and securely stowed take account of the following:

- Each item carried in a cabin only being stowed in a location that is capable of restraining it
 - Mass limitations being placarded on or adjacent to stowages
 - Baggage and cargo placed in lockers not being of such size that they prevent latched doors from being closed securely
- EU-OPS 1.605(d) requires that an operator must establish the mass of the traffic load, including any ballast, by actual weighing or by determining the mass of the traffic load in accordance with standard passenger and baggage masses as specified in OPS 1.620.

- EU-OPS 1.610 requires that an operator shall specify, in the Operations Manual, the principles and methods involved in the loading and in the mass and balance system that meets the requirements of OPS 1.605.
- EU-OPS 1.620 covers many associated aspects but EU-OPS 1.620(h) specifically requires that on any flight identified as carrying a significant number of passengers whose masses, including hand baggage, are expected to exceed the standard passenger mass, an operator must determine the actual mass of such passengers by weighing or by adding an adequate mass increment.

The CAA Flight Operations Inspectors are tasked, as part of their routine work, to ensure that operators' Operations Manuals meet the requirements of EU-OPS and to check that the correct procedures are implemented.

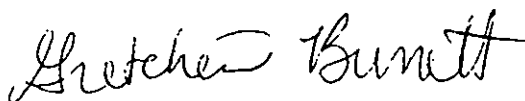
Thank you for raising your concerns with us, and I would like to reassure you that the CAA has also identified this issue and is monitoring the situation. When the CAA first became aware of an increase in the amount of baggage typically being taken into aircraft cabins we conducted a survey to check the consequences. One of the outcomes was that it is very unusual to be able to overload an overhead bin. They are more likely to 'bulk out' i.e. their physical capacity will be reached before the placard weight limit

You comment that cabin crew appear to have been suffering injuries when assisting passengers to load carry-on baggage and close bins. A retrieval search of the CAA Mandatory Occurrence Report database has only generated three associated reports detailing cabin crew injuries. The most recent event occurred in February 2001 where a member of the crew fell whilst attempting to close an overloaded overhead locker. The other cases, that occurred in 1997, relate to two separate occasions where the same overhead panel on the same aircraft suddenly opened causing injury to a member of the cabin crew. The stowage in this case, although overloaded, was not used for carry-on baggage but for on-board bassinets.

In March 2008 the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) commissioned a Survey on Standard Weights of Passengers and Baggage. The aim was to conduct a Pan-European survey of the current weights of passengers, carry-on luggage and checked baggage. The objective was to ascertain a set of weights of passengers, hand and checked baggage for use of aircraft mass and balance upon statistical principles and to investigate, identify and advise on the circumstances in which weights may be inapplicable and require separate analysis. The results of this project will be considered for an update of the standard mass tables used by European airlines and will inform future relevant EASA rule making activity in accordance with other priorities. In the meantime, the CAA continues to work closely with a wide range of operators who frequently undertake baggage weight surveys to ensure that the notional baggage weight values used are both realistic and accurate.

I hope this may be of assistance to you, and clarifies the points you raise. Thank you again for bringing this matter to our attention, and be assured that the CAA continues to monitor the loading of hand baggage in aircraft overhead bins.

Yours sincerely



Gretchen Burrett
Group Director, Safety Regulation Group