

Safety Bulletin No.7 – Passenger Safety Briefings

Who does this bulletin apply to?

This bulletin applies to all operators of Australian registered aircraft and should be read in conjunction with sub regulation 253 (4) of CAR 1988, Civil Aviation Order 20.11.14, Civil Aviation Advisory Publication (CAAP) 253-2 (0).

What is the purpose of this bulletin?

This bulletin is provided for information and guidance purposes to remind operators of their responsibilities regarding passenger safety briefings and to highlight the need to create better pre-flight passenger safety briefings that improve passenger recall in the event of an abnormal situation or emergency.

It may describe an example of an acceptable means, but not the only means, of demonstrating compliance with regulations and standards. This bulletin on its own does not change, create, amend or permit deviations from regulatory requirements, nor does it establish minimum standards.

Background

Passengers' survival rates are improved when they are informed about the correct use of equipment such as oxygen masks, and the actions they should take in the event of an emergency such as how to adopt the brace for impact position. This lifesaving information is relayed to passengers via passenger safety instruction cards, video footage, signs, placards, emergency lighting systems and verbal briefings provided by crew members. Historical data indicates that passenger attention to safety briefings is low and retention of information limited.

This bulletin highlights the need to improve the way in which safety feature demonstration briefings and passenger safety instruction cards are presented to passengers to engage them in a way which their recall of details is effective in an abnormal or emergency situation.

Research

Research undertaken by regulatory authorities and researchers worldwide continues to show passengers can incur serious injuries and death from an aircraft accident because they do not pay attention to cabin safety briefings. This results in passengers not able to help themselves in the case of an incident. A National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) accident report on US Airways flight 1549 that landed on the Hudson River in 2009, noted only about 10 of the 150 passengers retrieved life vests themselves after impact and evacuated with them. The report also indicated almost 70 percent of passengers did not watch any of the pre-flight safety briefing, with the most frequently cited reason for inattention being that passengers flew frequently and believed they were familiar with the equipment on the aircraft.

Acknowledgement is given to the fact that operators continue to explore innovative ways to capture passenger attention and improve recall and retention, however, these methods have their limitations.

Novelty and attractiveness wane the more the footage is viewed.

Why are briefings ineffective?

Data gathered over the past 30 years repeatedly show a shortfall between information presented by airline operators and the knowledge gained by passengers. Researchers, airlines and national aviation authorities have offered the following explanations of passengers' beliefs, attitudes and behaviours:

- ▶ perception from advertising that air travel is safe and always provides high priority to passengers may cause passengers to ignore potential danger
- ▶ passengers may believe falsely that aviation professionals will be able to accept full responsibility for cabin safety in any emergency
- ▶ frequent flyers may become overconfident about their ability to respond competently in an emergency
- ▶ novelty presented in video footage can distract from key safety messages
- ▶ technical problems with the passenger-address or video system or excessively noisy conditions such as other passengers speaking may interfere with the communication process
- ▶ passengers may have difficulty seeing cabin crew or video screens or on-screen captions
- ▶ passengers may shift their attention away from a briefing if the crewmember's delivery is rushed, perfunctory, incompetent or shows lack of interest
- ▶ passengers may be anxious about flying and may have difficulty focusing their attention on the briefing because of their emotional state.

How can briefing content and material be enhanced?

"Safety – no laughing matter?" (2013) identified several ways to make briefings more effective and memorable by:

- ▶ encouraging cabin crew to use eye contact to engage passenger involvement
- ▶ cabin crew should focus on the importance of safety information for passengers
- ▶ providing video safety briefings to passengers whilst in the airport and lounges to support onboard safety briefings
- ▶ conducting periodical passenger survey to test passenger understanding of safety briefings
- ▶ adding further detail of the cabin safety briefing reminders on long haul flights
- ▶ include non-aviation personnel in developing safety cards and video presentations, especially patterns and wording
- ▶ placing greater emphasis on overcoming language barriers and cultural variations.

Currently some operators change the pattern or sequencing of material contained within their safety briefings each month, whilst other operators use animated videos which include crew member performances including dancing or singing. However, there remains questions around whether these methods increase the interest of passengers to understand, recall and perform the safety instructions correctly or whether they only provide entertainment for a short period of time.



Delivery by cabin crew improves attention to briefings

A NTSB report stated that cabin crew member professionalism, the content of a briefing and the effective delivery of a live briefing are interdependent and controllable elements of an effective briefing. When synchronized, the elements encourage passengers to be attentive to predeparture safety briefings. The following recommendations for successful briefings also have been suggested by various cabin safety specialists:

- ▶ cabin crew members should craft carefully the first impression they make on passengers
- ▶ leadership and credibility should be established immediately by confident behaviour, a pleasant demeanour and showing professional knowledge of aircraft safety features
- ▶ appropriate eye contact and body language should reinforce the spoken message
- ▶ cabin crew members should practice consistently good public-speaking techniques such as thoughtful timing, pacing and articulation of words understandable by a diverse audience
- ▶ cabin crew should show enthusiasm for the subject during every safety briefing
- ▶ crew should avoid hurried safety briefings and work to resolve any systemic problems involving insufficient time to conduct briefings effectively.

Flight and cabin crew may benefit from recurrent training or other reinforcement on the importance of high-quality safety briefings.

Presenting better quality passenger safety instruction cards

The passenger safety instruction card is an important tool that cabin crew members use to individually brief passengers during normal operations and anticipated emergencies. The design, layout and location of the passenger safety instruction card is essential to promote quick comprehension of its content, in a self-explanatory manner, and to allow passengers to easily see and retrieve it.

Consideration should be given to:

- ▶ information on the passenger safety instruction card should be clear and presented in an understandable manner
- ▶ pictograms (also referred to as pictographs) are the recommended media type for passenger safety briefing cards, in lieu of text

- ▶ if text is necessary, it should be in the operator's official language(s), in English and in any other language(s) as appropriate
- ▶ systems, equipment and the actions required to operate them should be depicted pictorially or diagrammatically. All depictions should be simple and easy to understand
- ▶ multi-action procedures should be presented in correct sequence, and the sequence should be clearly identified (for example, numbered steps). The use of international symbols is encouraged
- ▶ use of a multi-coloured card rather than black and white is preferable
- ▶ design of the passenger safety instruction card should make it easy to identify the aircraft type
- ▶ passenger safety instruction cards should be tested for comprehension in accordance with recognised standards.

To ensure consistency and to minimise confusion for passengers, the information provided on the passenger safety briefing card should be comparable to the instructions on the passenger safety information signs, markings and placards installed in the cabin.



Additional resources

This section presents existing guidance material. This guidance includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. American National Standards Institute (ANSI). ANSI Z535.3-2011 – *Criteria for Safety Symbols* and ANSI Z535.3-2011 – *Criteria for Safety*.
2. Australian Transport Safety Bureau (2006). Public Attitudes, Perceptions and Behaviours towards Cabin Safety Communications. ATSB Research and Analysis Report, June 2006.
3. International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). (2018). *Manual on Information and Instructions for Passenger Safety (Doc 10086)*
 - ▶ International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standard ISO 3864 – *Graphical symbols – Safety colours and safety signs – Part 1: Design principles for safety signs and safety markings* and ISO 9186 – *Graphical symbols – Test methods*

- ▶ Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Aerospace Recommended Practice (ARP) Document No. SAE ARP577E – *Emergency, Instruction and Information Placards – Internal and External*.

Further information

View the [cabin safety](#) [\[/aircraft/landing-page/cabin-safety\]](#) pages.

If you have an inquiry please contact the cabin safety team on 131757 and ask to speak to a cabin safety inspector or email cabinsafety@casa.gov.au.

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