

...The aim of each crewmember for every flight should be the 'pristine flight' - in which nothing goes wrong, no mistakes are made and everything is properly prepared and ideal. The reality is that it will never be like that. Big or little changes, surprises, and modifications happen throughout the flight – so the crew aim to minimize the effects of these. They deal with problems as they arise by informing other crewmembers, discussing any problems, agreeing over solutions, putting them into effect and then ensuring that the action taken is effective. Proper execution of any flight demands constant awareness, frequent crosschecking, and sharing of information. Flight crew are expected to communicate immediately about any significant operational development. This communication should be accomplished in a positive but respectful manner.

The crew are responsible for bringing to the attention of the Captain anything that causes them significant concern. Correct decisions are dependent upon accurate definition of the occurrence. It is necessary for crew to ensure that the occurrence is clearly defined and, whenever possible, agreed upon before arriving at and acting upon any subsequent decisions. This requirement encourages crew participation so the Captain will be aware of the factors that could affect subsequent decisions. The responsibility for 'initiation, continuation, diversion or termination of a flight' is vested in the Captain, i.e. the Pilot in Command, or PiC.

Standardization

Standardization enhances safety and efficiency by defining tasks and specifying who does what and who is responsible. Good procedures reduce the burden of planning and promote confidence and precision within a crew. Not all eventualities can be foreseen. However, it has been well proven that the best operations involve a high level of planning, communication, crew support and standardization. It is the goal to achieve a precise level of standardization that discourages unsafe practices, carelessness, and the development of personal preferences, but is not so high that operational flexibility, good judgment, or professionalism are discouraged.

Operation of the aircraft must be under the direct control of one pilot at all times, either manually or through the auto-pilot. This requirement must be satisfied before conducting any other cockpit activity. There must be no element of doubt as to which pilot is controlling the aircraft. Any uncertainty regarding the safety of operation is to be immediately questioned and satisfactorily resolved.

Any action that involves the modification of an aircraft system mode of operation from normal (e.g. the shutdown of a major aircraft system – engine, hydraulic, electrical) needs to be stated and confirmed by another crewmember before the action is taken.

Flight Planning

The flight plan is provided by the company in a completed form just awaiting the crew's inspection. The Flight Despatch team at home base assemble the necessary Notams (Notices to Airmen concerning technical status changes to airports, facilities, navigation aids), weather data, loaded aircraft weight (Zero Fuel Weight), and aircraft technical status, including any limiting items. From this the dispatcher constructs a flight plan for the approval of the crew. This enables them to get away on time after reporting at the airport one hour before scheduled departure, or less for a domestic flight. After studying the weather and Notams, the fuel quantity is finalized, ordered, and the crew head for the aircraft. A good system is for one crewmember to enter the flight plan into the aircraft

system and the other to check it. The method will vary from one operator to another but the principle remains the same that the waypoint entries should be verified for accuracy from a different data source than the one used to enter them. Often this is not possible if a computer-generated track is not via recognized airway. In particular, the inserted present position at the ramp or gate must be checked to avoid great embarrassment later.

Fuel and Oil Requirements

The Captain is responsible for ensuring that fuel loaded for any flight is not less than that calculated in accordance with the Company fuel policy so this first compliance check occurs during flight-planning. Bearing in mind the terminal weather forecasts and any expected delays in flight, the Captain ensures that the reserve is sufficient to safely complete the flight to destination and/or alternate if required. The Captain is also responsible for ensuring that sufficient oil is carried to complete the flight safely. As the Captain doesn't refuel the aircraft or replenish the oil there is a limit to what can be done personally. But when the fuel is signed for a careful check is needed against the gauges, and the specific gravity and he or she needs to ensure that the total fuel is at least what was requested. The Captain needs to look for unusual oil uplifts, or any other unusual entries, and question them to try and build a full mental picture. From this mental picture, a consultation with knowledge and experience is necessary to ensure to the best of one's ability that everything is correctly accounted for.