

## **CUPE Local 4092 – Health & Safety Update**

### **Continuous Duty Days**

We have had an extraordinary number of Health & Safety Reports with regards to the continuous Duty Days. Concerns range from security at the airports, to no where to rest or sit to fatigue issues. Air Canada's position remains that this is a "contractual issue." While these pairings are legal under our contract, we feel that they are often not safe (or healthy), particularly when we are being forced to operate up to 8 in a row. We have filed a complaint with Transport Canada and are hoping that they will ensure help us resolve the issue. We should not have to negotiate our health & safety. If you have health & safety concerns with regards to these pairings, please write them up and copy us.

### **777 Overhead Bins**

We continue to get injuries to flight attendants from closing the large & heavy overhead bins on the 777 aircraft. Boeing had originally advised us that there would be a 'power assist' mechanism to help flight attendants with the weights of the bins. This has not been the case – the power assist will only work when the bins are empty. We are trying to address this in advance of Air Canada receiving the 787's in order to avoid this problem again. Air Canada's position is that two flight attendants are required to close each bin. Even with this in procedure in place, we are still seeing injuries to flight attendants when two people are closing the bins. The suggestion from AC includes that, if required, FA's should also ask passengers to move so that they can position themselves correctly under the overhead bins. If you are flying the 777 often, ask your manager what you can do to prevent injuring yourself from closing these bins and then follow their recommendation – let us know how it works! CUPE Health & Safety do not feel that this is an adequate solution to the problem. It is time consuming and, if followed correctly will likely cause delays, and, it is not preventing injuries. Please continue to report any concerns or injuries stemming from this to your CUPE Health & Safety Committee.

### **US Seal Tracking and Defective Equipment**

*Did you know.....* that if you provide us with the Red US seal number when you seal something as US we are usually able to track it and confirm the fix? Please continue to record the seal numbers on your reports for us to follow up and ensure that defective equipment is not going back into service. It is also very important that you use the Accident/Incident Label (as per SEP 2.1 pg 18) anytime that a piece of removable US equipment causes injury to a flight attendant. When this seal is used, the equipment in question requires additional testing before being returned into service (or destroyed). At our last Cara Inspection, we were advised that they only see one or two of these labels per year yet we have several injuries each month in YYZ caused by defective equipment.

We are also able to obtain maintenance reports if we have the cabin defect log number and follow up on these fixes for you as well. Please record the log numbers in your reports.

### **Crew Bag Stowage Onboard**

Our SEP clearly outlines the locations where cabin crew are to stow their bags on each aircraft type. Due to injuries from lifting bags into the overhead bins, Air Canada had committed to attempt to find floor level stowage for all cabin crew suitcases. What we have discovered is that the crew bag stowage locations in the SEP are often inaccurate – wrong row numbers or non-existent row numbers or a suitcase will not actually fit in the location where we are supposed to stow them (e.g. last row of seats too close to the wall for suitcase to fit under). Please continue to let us know if you encounter this problem and advise us of the fin number so that it can be looked at. Thanks.

### **HKG Hotel**

As you are probably aware, another ‘hot’ issue over the last few months was the Concerns stemming from the new Hong Kong layover hotel. Again, you provided us with many reports from which to work with. Reported Health & Safety concerns included mould and dampness in rooms, cleanliness, fire exits blocked, to name just a few. We are pleased to report that based on your feedback, CUPE was able to ensure that another inspection took place at the hotel in July. Based on the results of this inspection the crew layover hotel in Hong Kong has been changed.

### **Embraer Arming and Disarming Injuries**

Injuries from arming and disarming on the embraer aircraft continue to come in. The arming levers and vent flaps seem to be getting progressively stiffer over time. Although it is a slow process, we are looking at this from many angles. The ideal solution is to fix the door. However, in the interim we have developed a prototype of a tool that can be used to cover the levers when arming/disarming so that no one is injured. We now have approval from Air Canada to type trial this prototype. We are hoping to have the type trial take place in November. We are looking for volunteers who are flying on the Embraer in October and November to assist us during the type trial so please contact us if you are interested. This would consist of you using the prototype tool for arming and disarming on all your embraer flights and providing us with your feedback. Of course our end goal is still to fix the actual door, but, with several injuries occurring each month we need to look at an interim solution.

### **Hot Water Spigots**

We also continue to get reports from FA's being burned when filling individual cups or noodles with hot water for service. The company's position had always been that we should never fill an "individual" serving but instead, always use a pot to fill the individual cup/noodles. Recently, we have been advised that there should be one of the "long" hot water spigots in each galley. If you notice a galley with only short hot water spigots, please log it in the cabin defect logbook and ask that it be replaced with a long spigot – there should be one long spigot per galley.

## **Bed Bugs**

As you may have heard recently in the news, due to the banning of certain pesticides in many countries the cases of bedbugs are dramatically on the rise. Should you encounter bedbugs in your layover hotel room be sure to:-

1. Advise Hotel Staff on site and get your room changed
2. Write up a report and submit it to the company for follow up (please keep a copy or copy CUPE Health & Safety). Be sure to record your room # and date on the report.

## **Reporting Health & Safety Issues, including Hotel Issues that are Health & Safety in nature – The Internal Complaint Resolution Process**

Air Canada has a new reporting system for Hotel concerns called "Crew Care" where all hotel concerns, including those of a health & safety nature, are to be reported. Unfortunately, we do not get copies of these reports. Our concern is that API "Crew Care" are not part of Air Canada but rather an independent company. All Health & Safety concerns, by law, need to be reported by the employee to their supervisor/manager. We are still looking into how reporting under crew care will meet the intent under the Canada Labour Code II. In the interim we ask that you please:-

1. Copy CUPE Health & Safety on all Health and Safety hotel concerns reported via crew care or otherwise
2. Advise CUPE Health & Safety if no reply is received from Air Canada within 30 days of reporting the issue, or, if the reply received does not address your concern.

Which brings us to a reminder about the Internal Complaint Resolution Process. The law states that in order to try to resolve a Health & Safety Issue, the employee first has an obligation to report it to a supervisor/manager (preferably in writing). The manager and employee then try to resolve this concern amongst themselves. A written reply from Air Canada within 30 days of the submission of the original report is to be provided to the employee as a response to their report. At this point, if you are not happy with the reply or don't get a reply at all, it can be referred to CUPE Health & Safety for 'joint investigation' with the company. By law, we are not permitted to get involved with the issue until this point in the process.

We have seen what reporting consistently can do, take the Hong Kong Hotel. The more reports we get, the more power we have to make positive changes in your workplace relating to Health & Safety. Please continue to do your part and help us support you by ensuring we are copied on all potential Health & Safety Issues reported.

Thanks again for taking the time to report your Health & safety Issues. As always, should you have any questions, concerns or comments please feel free to contact the CUPE Health & Safety Office at (Ph) 905-676-4352 or at [osh@local4092.ca](mailto:osh@local4092.ca)