

## CUPE LOCAL 4092

### Membership Meeting – February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011

#### Health & Safety Report

##### **Reporting Health & Safety Concerns**

In the past we have been asking you to report health & safety concerns on the Air Canada ACF 32 “Health and Safety Concern Form”. When a Health & Safety concern is filled out on this form (or any other form), Air Canada has a legal obligation to reply to you in writing. Unfortunately, CUPE H&S is not copied on the forms but you have been great about dropping them off to our office to ensure we are kept in the loop.

The company has recently advised us that they plan to remove these forms from the flight satchel. In our minds, this means that they are removing your ability to easily report H&S concerns while you are in your workplace onboard the aircraft. By not having the form available onboard, it makes it more difficult for you, forcing you to take the time to come to the comm. Centre and print out a health & safety concern form upon your return which is then filled out after the fact when the details may not be as fresh in your minds.

We urge you to continue to reports your health & safety concerns.

While we continue to work on the issue of getting these forms back onboard, may we suggest that another way for you to forward these health & safety concerns would be via e-mail. You can send them to manager Sandra Dunlop at

[sandra.dunlop@aircananda.ca](mailto:sandra.dunlop@aircananda.ca)

Please be sure to indicate;

1. “This is a health & safety concern,” and
2. “I look forward to your reply”.

Feel free to copy us in as well;

[osh@local4092.ca](mailto:osh@local4092.ca).

The rest of the process remains unchanged. Once you get a written reply from the company, if you are not satisfied with the reply or, if you do not get a written reply within 30 days, you are then able to refer the complaint to CUPE/employee Health & Safety for joint investigation.

##### **Continuous Duty Days**

We continue to get people who are concerned about the health & safety implications of the continuous duty days. CUPE Health & Safety have already filed a complaint with Transport Canada about the issue and are still awaiting their reply. If you continue to feel strongly about the effects of these pairings on your health & safety, please follow the reporting process above and come to the CUPE Health & Safety office if you get a reply that you are not satisfied with. We can then guide you on the next steps available to you at that time.

## **Air Quality Onboard**

This is a topic of much debate at our joint health & safety meetings. While there is no denying that exposure to toxic fumes (“fume events”) do occur, there is currently no industry requirement or regulation to track suspected cases and therefore, this is not being done at Air Canada. Air Canada’s position is that this is “rare” and they are usually unable to confirm a fume event. However, they are not educating and encouraging us to report these cases.

We are in the process of trying to ensure that Air Canada informs employees:-

1. What to signs to look for, smell for, etc. to ensure we are reporting these fume events when they do occur
2. How to report it – relevant forms to fill out and what information to include
3. In the event of a confirmed exposure, all crew members operating on the aircraft need to be contacted and made aware of the occurrence.

At our last joint health & safety meeting with Air Canada, we proposed that information be included into our SEP’s to alert us of the correct process to follow if we suspect air contamination onboard one of our aircraft. Below is what we are proposing to have included in our SEP’s. (Note this is based on information that was directly communicated to us from Air Canada in a memo format back in 2008/09. The difference is that if it is included in the SEP it would be readily available to us when we need it and not lost in the information overload that we all experience.)

“On some occasions, sources of contaminants can be introduced into the cabin and cockpit by the Environmental Control Systems (ECS) or other routes. This may or may not be associated with a visible smoke or vapour. While this is rare, it is important that each crew member know what steps to take in order to ensure that it is properly addressed from both a mechanical point of view as well as from a personal health perspective.

If there is;-

1. an odor in the cabin (often a described as a “dirty socks” smell, but can also smell like an electrical/burning smell in nature or a “foul” smell) and
2. there are complaints from a crew member and/or passenger about feeling ill (symptoms may include headaches, nausea, lightheadedness, disorientation, fatigue, etc.), and,
3. you have not been able to determine the cause,

it is important for the crew to advise the captain immediately so that it can be reported in the AIRCRAFT logbook and a thorough investigation can be conducted and the issue can be properly addressed.

If you are experiencing any symptoms as described above, it is also important that you fill out an ACF 34C Flight Report (Injury/Illness/Incident) describing your symptoms, the type of smell, exact location, was is constant, passenger sensation, and stage of flight.

You should see a medical professional as soon as possible after any such occurrence and ensure that they are made aware of the possibility that you may have been exposed to a hazardous product. The Material Data Safety Sheets (MSDS) contain information that would be valuable to your doctor and it is suggested that you bring these along with you when you go. The MSDS sheets can be found on aeronet and onboard in the cockpit.

Should you have questions or concerns about the above, please feel free to contact your local Health & Safety Committees for further details and/or fill out a Health & Safety Concern form with any questions.”

## **Wires on Toilet shrouds**

It has come to our attention that the copper “breakaway” type wires that are used to attach the toilet shrouds onboard have, in many cases, been replaced with a silver wire that is not a “breakaway” type wire but requires the use of scissors to remove the wire. This can be a concern as if there is a water leak in the lav, on some fins you have to remove this shroud to gain access to the water shut off. An injury has already occurred when a flight attendant thought the silver wire was in fact breakaway wire and tried to remove it without the use of scissors. We are looking into why this change occurred and hoping to have the wires returned to the breakaway type wire to prevent injuries and allow for quick access to the water shut off when needed. In the interim, the scissors from the restraint ties kit can be used to cut the wire if needed.

## **Embraer Arming and Disarming Injuries**

We continue to get injuries from arming and disarming the embraer door. These injuries are getting worse with the winter months upon us as freezing temperatures are combined with the already stiff handles.

While our goal is to have Air Canada and Embraer fix the actual levers, we need to look at interim measure while this is being looked at.

In YYZ, we recently conducted a Type Trial using a luggage hook as a tool to arm and disarm the doors. The “hook” wraps around the arming/disarming lever and vent flap and prevents fingers from being in the way and inadvertently being caught up in the levers causing injury. Most type trial participants had positive things to say about the tool. We are looking at having it redesigned to an accurate fit and then recommending that it be stowed under each FA seat so that it is available to use onboard.

If you have any comments or questions, or, if you would like to participate in further type trials please do not hesitate to contact us.

## **Reporting Illness**

It has been reported to us that some of you are having problems when trying to fill out reports that are of “illness” in nature, especially in cases where the illness is incident “stress-related”. Please note that you have every right to fill out reports for illness. In fact, the SEP states that illness must be filled out on a 34C report. If your illness is potentially occupational in nature (ears, stress, fatigue etc.) please be sure to complete the form and state “Potential occupational illness. Please cc joint Health & safety committee” on it . Please note that the CUPE members of your Health and Safety committee do not receive copies of the 34C reports so please keep a copy for your records and provide us with one as well.

## **Incident/Accident Labels**

The Incident/Accident labels are found in the flight satchel and are supposed to be used any time a piece of removable equipment (cart, trolley, carrier, etc.) is involved in an “incident/accident”. This would include anytime you are injured by a piece of equipment. If you sustain an injury from a piece of equipment (e.g. a trolley door was US and your finger got caught in the door causing a scratch) please be sure to use this label on the trolley. This will ensure that the trolley is isolated for a more extensive inspection than it would get if the trolley is only tagged with a US seal.

And remember...please include the US seal number and the fact that an accident/incident label was used on your injury report as this will allow us to track the equipment and ensure that it has been looked at and fixed prior to it returning to service.

### **Health & Safety meeting minutes**

*Did you know.....*that the workplace Health & Safety committee are legally required to meet at least nine times per year? Detailed meeting notes are taken and there is a requirement to post them in a place where all employees have access. Next time you are in the communication centre and have time to kill, check out the Health & Safety board and you will find the meeting minutes in binders below the board. You can look up where your issues stand and find out what was discussed at the last meeting.

### **Change in CUPE Health & Safety Committee Members**

Any of you have had dealings with the CUPE Health & Safety office since 2001 are probably familiar with the name Jennifer Young (formerly Jennifer Luk). She has been working in the office and dedicated to H&S for the last 10 years. Jennifer has made the difficult decision to return to her flying duties for the March 2011 block month. We wish her all the best and would like to thank her for her years of hard work. She will be missed. Angela Scott will be returning to the CUPE Health & Safety committee effective March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 after her maternity leave. We would like to welcome Angela back and are excited to have her back with the team.

### **Local Website**

The new CUPE local 4092 website was launched at the end of 2010. This is a great resource and includes health & safety information such as:-

- What to do when you are injured at work
- How to report a health & safety concern
- Air Quality Information
- Radiation information
- How to contact us

*Thank you for taking the time to attend this local meeting. Please feel free to contact us at any time if you have any Health & Safety questions or concerns.*

**CUPE Local 4092 Health & Safety Committee**  
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