

Summer Disruption Checklist 'Defensive Flying'

- Edition 2023 -

Note: This Checklist has been compiled by ECA to draw attention to a number of safety-relevant issues that crews are likely to be faced with during a period where the European aviation system is expected to be strained to the maximum – this summer already for the second year in a row.

This summer disruption checklist is not intended to supersede or replace individual company procedures and should be seen as an additional awareness tool to ensure safe, reliant, and efficient flight operations. It should also be seen as complementary to the EASA Safety Information Bulletin ([SIB - 2023-05](#)) and [related content](#)

PREFLIGHT

Take care of yourself – take care of your crew

Adequate rest before commencing a flight duty is paramount. If you are fatigued or feeling unfit to fly, step away from your duty and file a Fatigue Report (see also [ECA's Summer Fatigue guidance](#)).

Remember, fatigue is difficult to self-diagnose and is literally a 'silent killer'. Consciously monitor your alertness and stress levels as well as within your crew and encourage your crew to be assertive, including when it comes to fitness.

Plan for disruptions

Many disruptions will be out of your control, such as ATC slots, ground handling delays, weather etc. While you cannot foresee every issue, plan and brief for contingencies. During this – hopefully last – exceptional summer period, priorities might change. Fuel planning for contingencies might take precedence over fuel planning for efficiency. (Reference EASA SIB 2023-05 2.3 "Planning")

While EASA fuel schemes have changed and your company's fuel scheme may have as well, the Pilot In Command remains the final authority on fuel carried.



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Own the clock.....

The Pilot in Command is ultimately responsible for the safe conduct of the flight. This means that you have the authority to refuse any course of action that, from a safety perspective, you don't feel comfortable with.

While the Pilot in Command is central to the coordination of the flight, you should not feel compelled to make up for every deficiency of the flight process and put unnecessary pressure on yourself and your crew.

DURING FLIGHT

Stick to Standard Operating Procedures.....

Standard Operating Procedures are the foundation of a safe and efficient operation. In a situation where disruptions and stress might accumulate, resist the temptation to adopt 'workaround' procedures or take shortcuts in your work routines.

Keep Calm & Fly Safe.....

Do not rush into approaches or accept shortcuts if it might end up in an unstabilised approach. Take extra care when accepting last minute runway changes or intersection departures to check the correct performance. "Haste makes waste" ...So if it is too tight - state "unable" or Go Around.

Your first and foremost responsibility is to the safety of your passengers and crew!

Commander's Discretion is a two-way street.....

Operators have been advised by EASA that "Commander's Discretion" is not intended to make up for unrealistic scheduling practices and that they should provide for contingencies in their planning - including foreseeing extra buffers. (EASA SIB 2023-05 2.1. Flight Time Limitations)

Commander's Discretion is a tool for the commander that is meant to be used in exceptional circumstances, usually to allow a flight to be continued to a destination. It is NOT a standard resource planning tool for the operator, nor a tool to make up for its unrealistic scheduling practices.



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If planning to use such Discretion, remember to ensure that you and your crew are fit to safely finish your duty. Before your next flight, please consult **ECA's 'Spot-on' guidance**.

Importantly, you also have the authority under Commander's Discretion to reduce a Flight Duty Period or to extend a rest period if you deem it required. – **Safety comes first !**

POSTFLIGHT

If it wasn't reported, it didn't happen

Reporting is important!.....

If faced with disruptions or situations that might potentially be a hazard to the operation, report them – even at the end of a long day. If you don't report, nobody will know about safety-critical situations – and the system cannot be changed.

Use your company's reporting scheme to report all safety relevant issues. Additionally, you may also report via your national authority, or to **EASA's Confidential Safety Reporting** (CSR) channel to draw attention to situations, alleged malpractices and irregularities that you feel should be addressed.

Debrief the lessons learned.....

After a long and eventful day, there is a natural tendency to “go home” quickly.

Nevertheless, we urge you to take a couple of minutes to review the day with your crew and have candid feedback from all of them. Despite the possible stresses and frustrations every flight is an opportunity for positive take-aways.

“NO COMPROMISE ON SAFETY”

(EASA Summer Safety Campaign 2023)

06/07/2023

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