



JETBLUE'S SICKENING RESPONSE TO FUME EVENTS

Adding insult to injury, JetBlue is punishing Inflight Crewmembers who experience toxic fume events on their aircraft in an apparent bid to silence its own employees.

The TWU Health and Safety Committee at JetBlue has identified approximately 70 IFCs who were outrageously hit with unwarranted or excessive discipline, including Progressive Guidance, following their exposure to toxic air inside cabins.

"JetBlue's response to these issues has been abysmal and void of any caring value," Health and Safety Committee Chairman Shane Rogers-Mauro said.

Some IFCs have been disciplined for not filing post-incident paperwork within 12 hours, an arbitrary JetBlue deadline that management recently shortened.

One group of IFCs was disciplined for administering oxygen to a flight attendant without first calling for MedAire. Management claimed this violated official procedures. But Inflight Crewmembers have always been taught that situational awareness supersedes any procedure in emergencies, and procedures typically are only a roadmap, Rogers-Mauro said.

In another incident, management sent an Orlando-based crew that reported toxic fumes to a crew lounge to be debriefed. The crewmembers were held for six hours before they were released and allowed to go to the emergency room for treatment and evaluation.

The Health and Safety Committee has helped IFCs who have been unfairly disciplined by management to file appeals.

In addition to the unwarranted and outrageous disciplinary actions, IFCs have been subjected to bullying by supervisors, including team leaders and base managers. These supervisors deny the possibility that crewmembers have been negatively impacted by fumes and threaten to file charges against them if they refuse to continue to work.

Toxic fume events occur when leaking engine oil, hydraulic fluid, or other liquids that are used in aircraft operations, contaminate the air circulated through the air-bleed system. Those liquids can be turned into gases by the extreme heat engines generate.

Exposure to even low levels of these contaminants can incapacitate passengers and crew. Long-term exposure can lead to serious, debilitating health issues.

In one of the latest incidents, four Inflight Crewmembers became ill on a Florida-bound.

"The cabin filled with thick, raunchy smoke while boarding," IFC Dee Lozito, a member of the TWU contract negotiation team, said. "They had difficulty breathing, tight chests and headaches."

One of the crewmembers had a possible allergic reaction with her lips swelling up, Lozito, who communicated with some members of the crew from New York where contract negotiations were taking place, said.

This is an industry-wide work hazard, TWU International President John Samuelsen said. The Transport Workers Union of America is leading a campaign to force airlines to take responsibility and ensure the air that passengers and crewmembers breath is safe, he said. The TWU represents more than 17,000 IFCs across the United States.



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"This is another dirty and dangerous little secret of the airline industry – and we're exposing it because it's a very important health issue," Samuelsen said. "There's always a potential. . . that flight attendants, passengers or the flight crew are breathing in chemicals and things that can make you very sick – even carcinogens."

The campaign made progress recently with the introduction of the Cabin Air Safety Act in Congress, Samuelsen said. The bill would better protect passengers and Inflight Crewmembers with several mandates, including the installation of carbon monoxide detectors on commercial aircraft.

Samuelsen and TWU Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes are urging all IFCs to tell their federal legislators to pass The Cabin Air Safety Act (H.R. 2208). Our website (<http://b6.twu.org>) provides more information along with an easy method for IFCs to contact their federal representatives.

THE CABIN AIR SAFETY ACT

Sen. Richard Blumenthal from Connecticut introduced the Cabin Air Safety Act in the Senate on April 10. Rep. John Garamendi of California introduced the bill in the House of Representatives. It would better protect airline passengers and crewmembers by:

- **Mandating Training Regarding Toxic Fumes on Aircraft**
Require that flight attendants, pilots, aircraft technicians, and first responders receive training on identifying toxic fumes. The training materials will include education on sources and types of fumes, symptoms, appropriate responses, and how to report incidents.
- **Requiring FAA to Record and Monitor Reports of Fume Events**
Directs the FAA to develop a standardized form/system to record airline crew reports of toxic fumes. Requires the FAA to publish these reports at least quarterly on a public website, so that they can be searched, reviewed, and analyzed.
- **Ensuring Investigations Occur**
Requires the FAA to conduct investigations, in cooperation with the airlines and labor unions, after a toxic fume event to study the cause and prevent future events.
- **Installing Carbon Monoxide Sensors on Aircraft**
Directs airline manufacturers and air carriers to install and operate carbon monoxide detectors situated in the air supply system to best enable pilots and maintenance technicians to locate the sources of air supply contamination. These detectors will alert the crew if carbon monoxide levels exceed national air quality standards. Aircraft manufacturers must develop procedures that inform the crew on how to respond to alarms.