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October 10, 2019

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable John Garamendi
United States House of Representatives
2368 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Blumenthal and Congressman Garamendi:

On behalf of JetBlue's more than 22,000 crewmembers, thank you for your September 19, 2019 letter to JetBlue CEO Robin Hayes regarding cabin odors. Mr. Hayes asked that I respond on his behalf.

We appreciate and share your concern for the health and well-being of all of our crewmembers. We are acutely aware of the concern some of our crewmembers have expressed regarding perceived odors on our aircraft. JetBlue has expended considerable resources to study this issue, develop effective reporting procedures, develop procedures for identifying root systemic causes for odors and fixing them, and making investments to improve aircraft systems to ensure the air our crewmembers and customers breathe is of the highest quality. As you know, odor issues are not isolated to JetBlue and have impacted nearly all airlines in the world today.

JetBlue has been industry leading in its efforts to address this issue. We have led an effort with Airlines for America to develop an industry-standard reporting protocol. Unfortunately, we have found this to be a very emotional issue and many myths have been propagated through social media to feed crewmember angst over this issue.

Through our research from each reported odor event, we found that none of the reported odor events resulted in JetBlue crewmembers or customers receiving unhealthy air. Our research has shown that each crewmember has unique varying sensitivities to odors and those sensitivities manifest themselves in many ways. To alleviate concerns, JetBlue made significant investments in new cabin air filters, comparable to those used in hospital intensive care units, and has established industry-leading procedures for crewmembers to report odors and identify their source. These procedures are critical in enabling JetBlue to isolate the root cause of the odor and fix the cause of the problem, not the symptom. We continue to study this issue, share information freely with other airlines and to communicate with our crewmembers. Importantly, JetBlue has seen a significant decrease in odor complaints as a result of enhanced crewmember training on expected odors in the workplace. We will continue our exhaustive efforts on this issue so that our crewmembers are comfortable and confident in their workplace.

In terms of classifying cabin odor incidents, each occurrence is determined to be either a "Smoke/Fire" incident or given one of four levels of severity designations. A "Smoke/Fire" incident is characterized by "Any burning odor accompanied by visible smoke, particulate matter, or any odor accompanied by any aircraft annunciated smoke or fire related message." Level of severity categories are characterized by multiple escalating descriptions which includes among other characteristics "Transient (non-Persistent) Odor" or "Odor is not strong" in a Level 1 to

"Suspected or potential nefarious release of toxin" or "The need for an immediate response is apparent" in a Level 4 incident.

Thank you for your letter. I invite you and your team to visit our offices and meet with our technical operations leadership team and inflight leadership team to learn more about the work we are doing to address this issue including additional details on our incident categorization. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Josh Dover in JetBlue's Government Affairs office for additional information and to schedule a visit.

John M. Allen

John Allen
Vice President Safety

A NOTE FROM ED

VP INFLIGHT EXPERIENCE

Greetings Inflight,

As we recently shared, we've updated our procedures for managing cabin odor/fume events (in Flight Attendant Manual [FAM] 12.7) as part of our efforts to continually ensure we have the best safety processes in place and that we avoid unnecessary operational disruption. It's an important update and I want to be sure we are all aligned on the cabin odor/fume process.

Our new FAM procedure clarifies the process and criteria for reporting odors/fumes when we encounter them on the aircraft. **Our first step is always to determine if the odor/fume is normal or non-normal**. (See FAM 12.7 for details.)

- **Normal**: Odors/fumes which do not need to be reported to the Flight Deck and require no further action or medical response on the part of the Crew
- **Non-normal**: Odors/fumes which should be evaluated further so we can provide an accurate description to the Flight Deck

Determining whether an odor/fume is normal is important because it helps avoid unnecessary disruptions like interruptions to the Flight Deck during critical phases of flight, diversions, returns to gate, etc. – all things we aim to avoid because they carry with them their own safety risks.

Managing Non-normal Odors/Fumes

When we identify an odor/fume as non-normal, our next steps are to gather the required information and relay it to the Flight Deck so they can determine the best course of action for the event at hand. Here, we are looking to provide:

- Type
- Apparent source
- Location
- Intensity
- Phase of flight

All odors/fumes (both normal and non-normal) have the potential to be irritants. **While MedAire is always a resource for you, Crewmembers should only contact MedAire during cabin odor/fume events if (1) it is a non-normal odor/fume and (2) you exhibit physical symptoms and become unable to perform your duties as an Inflight Crewmember.** As always, it is important to maintain a calm cabin environment throughout the event.

Relying on Our Fellow Crewmembers

As we manage non-normal odor/fume events, we rely on the expertise of our Pilots and Tech Ops partners, who follow industry leading procedures, to make appropriate safety of flight decisions. If the aircraft is cleared to fly, Inflight is expected to continue with the flight. We follow the guidance of subject matter experts and if Inflight decides not to operate once a plane has been cleared, it is considered a refusal to fly and the Crewmember may be subject to disciplinary action.

Your Questions Answered

I know there are questions surrounding cabin odor/fume events so I've included a list of FAQs that I have heard from Crewmembers lately. One question I am often asked is whether leaders are flying on these aircraft to experience the events just as the frontline does. The answer is yes; leaders from Flight, Inflight, and Tech Ops have been flying on some of the top reported tails to further investigate any issues.

We've also seen confusion regarding the follow up process that takes place when a Crewmember experiences an odor/fume event and does not feel fit to complete Inflight duties. We follow an extensive and thorough process and you can read through the FAQ below for a step by step guide.

It has been said before but bears repeating – we take cabin odor/fume events very seriously and across each workgroup, we have some of the best procedures in the industry for handling them. We've spent the last two years investigating, researching, and learning all we can about odor/fume events and we've used that knowledge to continually ensure our safe operation. Thank you for adhering to all procedures as you manage these events.

Best,

Ed Baklor
VP Inflight Experience

FAQs

What is the follow up process for a Crewmember who experienced a cabin odor/fume and does not feel fit to complete Inflight duties?

Every odor/fume event is taken seriously and is investigated by Inflight Safety. The follow up process has evolved over the years and the current process is listed below:

- If a Crewmember encounters a non-normal odor/fume event and does not feel fit to complete Inflight duties, MedAire must be contacted.
- If MedAire advises the Crewmember to seek medical attention, the Crewmember must contact an Inflight Duty Lead.
- For safety reasons, Crewmembers must first seek immediate medical care locally (in the city they are in) before traveling back to base.
- Once cleared by local medical professionals, an Inflight Duty Lead will arrange transportation to base and the Crewmember will connect with their Team Lead for follow up on the full On the Job Injury (OJI) process.
- The Crewmember will have a full, in-person debrief with Inflight Safety, Crew Relations, a Team Leader and a member of Inflight leadership before they are permitted to return to work. This debrief may include senior leadership as well.
- During a debrief, Crewmembers are asked to share what happened, how they handled the event, and if procedures were followed.
- Crewmembers will not be able to return to work until these steps are complete.
- The debrief will determine if a Crewmember is able to return to work or whether they will need to attend further emergency and odor/fume training and it may also include an assessment at JetBlue University (JBU).

- If it is determined that a Crewmember is unable to return to working the Inflight position, we will consider offering the Crewmember an Airports Operations or Ground Operations role in one of our Airports, subject to successfully completing required training.

I have heard our aircraft oil (which contains TCPs) is the cause of cabin odor/fume events. Are TCPs toxic?

TCPs (tricresyl phosphates) are substances found in many consumer products such as plastics, upholstery, carpets and new beds. TCPs are used in these products because they decrease flammability in textiles and corrosion on machinery. TCP is in aircraft oil in very small quantities and when the oil vapor contacts moisture, it degrades and may cause an unpleasant or strong odor. You cannot smell TCPs because they are odorless. Independent scientific research has provided evidence and established that the amounts of TCPs to which aircraft occupants could be exposed, even over multiple long-term exposures, are within acceptable health and safety standards.

What is Tech Ops doing to prevent odor/fume events?

Tech Ops thoroughly investigates each reported odor/fume event. Additionally, they:

- Retrofitted our entire Airbus fleet with new state-of-the-art advanced HEPA filters to remove odors/fumes.
- Transitioned to a new engine and APU oil that produces fewer odors/fumes.
- Adopted a new Environmental Control System cleaning procedure, developed by the equipment manufacturer to help remove residual oil from leaks.
- Completed in-depth shop testing to engines that had repeat odor/fume events (only airline to do this) and confirmed there were no contributing problems to those engines.
- Continue to engage with Airbus, engine manufacturers, Tech Ops Business Partners, and other airlines for information sharing and best practices.
- Instituted new reporting checklists and procedures depending on data captured from inside the aircraft.
    - This process for investigating odors/fumes is comprehensive and includes inspection of the APU, the engine, and air vents.