



ECA
Piloting Safety

Summer Disruption Checklist – ‘Defensive Flying’

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.

It 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.

PREFLIGHT

- **Take care of yourself – take care of your crew**

Ensure that you have had adequate rest before you commence a flight duty. 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 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 exceptional summer period, priorities might change. Fuel planning for contingencies might take precedence over fuel planning for efficiency.

- **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 create unnecessary pressure to 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.

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

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

Commander's Discretion (CD) 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 tool for the operator to make up for its unrealistic scheduling practices.

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, if faced with an unusual situation, 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. 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](#) channel to draw attention to situations, alleged malpractices and irregularities that you feel should be addressed.

- **Debrief the lessons learned**

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.

FLY SAFE !

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