



Securi*Care*

Flight ZB504 & ZB505 Man – Ibiza
Thursday 10th September 2015

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS
On Behalf of the
UK CABIN SAFETY LIAISON GROUP

FLIGHT REPORT

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Observing: Phil Hardy & Jack Mooney (Securicare)

We arrived at the airport around 19:45 some 3 hours 45 minutes before the flight. Apart from the passengers checking in for a Pakistani International Airlines flight, the terminal was empty with the exception of half a dozen Monarch passengers waiting for the check-in to open.

We proceeded to Departures and security. There was no queue at the boarding pass auto-scan to proceed to security. The queue at the security gate consisted of around 200 people with more arriving as we waited. There was only one walk-through metal detector operating and quite a few passengers were verbally critical of the time it was taking to process passengers. I experienced the same problem a couple of weeks earlier when flying to Italy. This can be quite a frustrating part of the passenger journey through the airport and some of the airport staff are a bit abrupt. It would reduce frustration if this can be improved?

Once through duty free we went to get a coffee (approx. 21:00). The facilities in the lounge were all shut apart from WH Smiths and The Spinning Jenny Bar. The bar was very quiet apart from a hand-full of Ibiza passengers, (flight ZB504 was the only departure on the information display).

At 21:50 that passengers started to arrive at the Spinning Jenny in large numbers. There were several groups of both male and females along with some smaller parties in groups of 3 or 4 and some couples (probably around 6-8).

At approximately 10:15, two police officers stood outside the bar for around 15 minutes; I think they would have had more impact if they had walked around the bar area?

Most of the passengers drank for the next 2 hours, the majority not too excessively although one or two were obviously drunk. A couple of points to make:

1. One group of males (about 8 in the group) opened a litre Bottle of Jack Daniels, (which I presume must have been purchased in Duty Free), which they all drank along with the drinks they had purchased at the bar. I am pretty sure the staff saw this but chose to ignore it. I don't know what the policy is on this but it should, in my opinion, have been addressed
2. On a couple of occasions some passengers took their drinks with them to gate 300 for a smoke, again I think the bar staff should have prevented this from happening

Me and Jack started boarding at 11:50 with the rest of the passengers, who all seemed to take the decision to leave the bar more or less around the same time. They were loud and generally in a good mood as they boarded. The crew were all female.

We were seated in row 17 and most of the male groups were seated behind us. One group who were spread out in the rows behind us (mostly rows 18-20) seemed to be having trouble finding their seats. We had to ask one of them to vacate our seats.

This resulted in the cabin crew and ground staff trying to identify who was supposed to be sat where. A male passenger in 19F (one of the group of males) was asked several times where he should be sat and he, along with some of his party were trying to be funny and avoided the question. This resulted in a police officer boarding to ask them to explain clearly who was sat where. The passenger in 19F was eventually allowed to stay where he was. His motive for moving became apparent once we took off as he spent almost all of the flight chatting to the two girls in row 18 in front of him.

As we pushed back the crew made an announcement explaining that disruptive behaviour would not be tolerated and not to drink duty free on board and this message was reaffirmed before the seat belt sign went off during the ascent.

Once the seat belt sign went off there was a mad rush for the toilets. The passengers were noisy but in good spirits. The dimmed lights seemed to have a calming effect. For the rest of the flight there was just the usual banter and flirting you would expect on a late night flight to Ibiza.

Biting incident

There was an incident just after the plane landed which involved the group of males sat just behind us. During the flight the passenger who had moved seats to 19F had begun to annoy another member of his own party (19E) by constantly leaning over the seats in front and by climbing over him on several occasions to visit the toilets and purchase drinks for the girls in the seats in front of him.

It became apparent during landing that this incident had escalated, as there was an exchange of words and pax 19E could clearly be heard saying 'I'm warning you not to do that again'. We couldn't see in the dark what he was doing, but there was clearly a scuffle and one of the group who chose to sit next to Jack for the landing (17C) lent across the aisle and told them to pack it in and not to draw attention to themselves.

When the light came on we could see that the passenger in 19F was bleeding from his mouth and had blood on his shirt. The rest of the group were all trying to calm the situation down by warning them not to continue arguing and drawing attention to the situation. The crew and most of the other passengers, with the exception of those in the immediate area, were not aware anything had happened.

We waited until everyone had disembarked and went to talk to the crew who confirmed they had not heard the incident occurring but had noticed the bloodied passenger when disembarking.

The group of males involved managed the incident between themselves, and even split into two groups for the bus transfer, boarding 2 different buses to avoid any further exchanges between the two people involved. Jack and I followed 1 group. We were on the same bus as the bloodied passenger. He was clearly very angry and was telling the rest of the group what had happened during landing. He apparently tried to kiss his annoyed friend during landing and when asked 'not to do it again', he did and his 'friend' then bit his lip and punched him in the face.

We followed our half of their party through arrivals and baggage reclaim. As we left to check-in for the return flight the two groups were about to re-unite outside the airport.

We told the crew when we re-boarded what had happened.

The return flight went without event as almost all the passengers, with the exception of Jack and I went straight to sleep.

Notes:

The crew were all very calm and professional throughout the outbound flight, and apart from the seating problems encountered before closing the doors, they did not have to deal directly with any disruptive behaviour during the flight.

The flight went without trouble apart from the biting/scuffle incident during landing. This incident could have been a much more difficult situation to manage had it happened earlier in the flight; there would inevitably have been further exchanges between the two passengers and the rest of the group would probably have been drawn into the incident.

Because the incident happened during landing, the group of passengers were able to manage it themselves until they disembarked and left the airport.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The flight was everything you would expect on a 23:30 flight to a 'party destination' such as this. The passengers were in party mood and were generally drinking alcohol in generous amounts pre-flight. We also agreed that many of them must have been drinking prior to their arrival at the airport.

The main conclusion we drew from this exercise was that it might be possible to do more to avoid potentially disruptive/drunken passengers from boarding flights. This would require some proactive behavioural management from ground staff and others who have passenger contact during the pre-flight experience. One thing is certain, this is not just an airline problem, this will require other airport staff to work together to prevent incidents like this occurring on board aircraft.

As stated earlier, some passengers were verbally expressing their frustration whilst queuing to go through security. Whilst staff resources is no doubt a cost issue for the airport, having a member of staff 'patrol' the queue at busy times to communicate with passengers and inform them of potential waiting times and answer questions would help with customer service issues. This would also provide valuable intelligence about potentially troublesome/drunken passengers which could be acted upon in terms of a warning about their behaviour/drinking by the appropriate person (e.g. security/police). This early intervention would reinforce the message that their behaviour was being monitored and, if it continues, may result in them not being allowed to board the aircraft. There may also be an opportunity at security to advertise the possible consequences of disruptive behaviour by way of a board or poster campaign. The queuing passengers at security would have time to read and absorb this message and as it is a security/safety issue, it fits nicely with this part of the passenger's airport experience.

The staff in the Spinning Jenny Bar must have been aware that duty free alcohol was being consumed on their premises and chose to ignore this rather than address the issue. This was a missed opportunity to demonstrate that their behaviour for the whole of the airport experience is under observation and that members of staff are prepared to intervene and report as necessary.

If it's possible, a representative of the airline/boarding staff could visit the bar area and talk to passengers and remind them that they may not be allowed to board if they turn up at the gate unfit to fly? (You can't accuse someone of being drunk without having the capacity to prove it). If this is not practical the Police, who were there anyway, might be able to provide this function?

All these opportunities to interact with passengers would increase passenger awareness of the fact their behaviour was being constantly assessed. It would also provide additional information and intelligence which could be passed on to the boarding gates and cabin crew if there was some system for gathering and passing on the information. Currently the crew would need to make the decision whether or not a passenger is allowed to board. The prospect of off-loading a passenger and the ensuing delay is obviously a major factor in the decision making process and highlights the need for earlier intervention during the passenger's airport journey and, where necessary termination of their journey, to allow time for baggage removal etc. This will require the whole industry to get involved and be proactive in dealing with this problem.

Once the aircraft takes off the crew would need to rely on the skills they are trained in during in initial and recurrent training for disruptive passenger management. It is difficult to see what additional training or skills they could be given other than the key elements that are already covered on the Securicare Training Programme.

These difficult flights will always be challenging. Some crew are naturally better performers in difficult conditions such as these; cabin managers will need to be aware of how crew are coping and be prepared to assist and intervene to support crew who are feeling the pressure. Perhaps this offers a training opportunity for cabin managers?

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