

A RELIABLE SOURCE

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An ALPA XJT LEC 175 Publication

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Rich Castle
Chairman, LEC 175 IAH
Rich.Castle@alpa.org

Rich Castle
LEC 175 Chairman
Rich.Castle@alpa.org

Justin Demer
LEC 175 Vice Chairman
Justin.Demer@alpa.org

Sabrina Riffle
A Reliable Source
Editor
Sabrina.Riffle@alpa.org

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *A Reliable Source*, the official newsletter of the ExpressJet Houston pilot group. You, the Houston pilot, have elected Justin and me to represent you on a local level and stand up for our collective group on the MEC level. This communication is one of the new tools we are using at the local level. The past six months have seen more than their share of rumors. We will use this monthly electronic newsletter to confirm or debunk some of the viral information running through the crew rooms.

In addition, we will write articles that expand on issues pilots ask us about during the month. It is important not only to answer your questions, but also to communicate those answers to all pilots. If you are asking a question, you can bet others are unclear about the same issue. These can be general or specific questions. If you hear a rumor and want to check on its validity, e-mail us, and we will get to the bottom of it.

In fact, there were some rumors floating around last month. Some said gyro-stabilized binoculars were used to identify pilots who taxied to the gate without shoulder harnesses on. Others claimed the assistant chief pilots were going through flight-deck trash looking for evidence of Jeppesen revisions.

Both of these rumors are not true in Houston. No pilot has been identified, reprimanded, or received discipline for these issues. I cannot speak for other bases.

On a day-to-day level, Justin Demer and I are here to represent you, the Houston line pilot. Your ALPA representatives are actively advocating for you when issues arise with the company. We will not tolerate unfairness to or

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Source . . .*



harassment of our pilots by anyone in the company. We expect other departments to be held to the same standards that we must live by day in and day out. If you feel you have been a victim of this type of behavior, call us day or night. Please save any documentation or voice mails. They will help.

We will briefly share some policies that, if not understood, could lead to discipline or at least a meeting with a Houston assistant chief pilot. In very general terms, we will share overviews of issues we have seen on a recurring basis.

There is a companion format to this newsletter. It is called *A Reliable Blast*. This will be used for time-sensitive information that needs to be sent out quickly. Both of these will be sent in electronic format.

Starting next month, we hope to include a multipart series about the RLA and the contract negotiating process. I am trying to time the series so it will parallel what we are going through.

RICH'S SOAPBOX

As I am writing this, the company just said, "Yeah, our bad; we cannot give back the days off you gave us because we need to keep the company running." To say I am disappointed is not true. I am aghast. For years we have heard that ExpressJet's operational excellence is the envy of other airlines and has resulted in our temporary and longer-term contracts. The MEC has advised the company since last October that ExpressJet was understaffed and faced this exact situation. These concerns fell on deaf ears. For the time being, it appears ExpressJet's operational excellence stops at the flight deck door. Is this a recent problem that is becoming systemic, or is it because we lack the direction of a CEO? I cannot answer that. What I can answer is that the MEC will get to the bottom of this and will do everything in its power to make the company regain the reputation of having "operational excellence."

THE FIRST COUNCIL 175 MEETING

Our new council will hold its first Council 175 meeting on Monday, April 26, from 1800 to 2100, or until all questions are answered. It will be held at the union hall, 3808A World Houston Parkway. We picked this day because an MEC meeting will follow on



April 27, which will allow some committee chairmen to attend. After the meeting, I hope pilots in attendance can get a little face time with committee and MEC members in an informal setting. We will also have a guest speaker—Continental ramp tower controller Ryan Neil will be there to share the logic behind what they do and how they do it. Food and refreshments will be provided.

Going forward, we want to have four local meetings each year. The first will be at the ALPA building for obvious reasons. I would like the next three meetings to be in the surrounding communities of Houston. Maybe we could have the second meeting in The Woodlands, the third by Clear Lake,

and the fourth at another location. We need your input! If you are familiar with suitable venues, please let us know. If you have a guest speaker wish list, submit that to us as well.

At the very least, this meeting will be entertaining. It is our first under Robert's Rules of Order. Watching Justin and me work through this will be like seeing a blind, deaf, and mute person running a Marine Corps obstacle course. Leave the cream pies at home.

HOUSTON SECURITY SCREENING

Did you hear that ExpressJet pilots are not supposed to use front-of-the-line privileges? It is a basic courtesy extended to all pilots at every airport I know of, but we are not allowed to use this privilege at our hub airport. Nothing chaps your britches like being used as a pawn in a political dance.

The company does understand our need to move throughout the IAH airport system in an efficient manner. Whether it is showing for a pairing, re-clearing Security after Customs, or getting new duty items at the Stop-Over Store, the TSA security line is an obstacle that can affect our ability to be at our duty station on time.

As of this writing, here is the procedure for clearing security lines in Houston if time is a factor.

Politely and professionally excuse yourself to the head of the line. If there are many crewmembers, it might be wise to spread out among all the open lines. If a Continental representative challenges you, kindly explain that you are required to exercise your head-of-the-line privileges because of operational necessity. If that is not enough to pacify the individual, ask him or her to call the ExpressJet Chief Pilot's Office for clarification.

If you are approached by a TSA agent and given direction, you must follow that instruction.

In either case, if you are asked for your name and employee number, give it to them. You will not be in any violation of ExpressJet policy.

Always remember—we are representatives of the company at all costs. Do not let a situation escalate. We must be professional, polite, and courteous throughout this whole evolution. Approaching this with an "entitled" attitude, displaying unprofessional behavior, or raising voices will not be tolerated.

I want to share with you some background to the security line situation. Houston is awaiting the arrival of a new federal security director (FSD). This is the person who approves the use of the side door in terminal E. I understand that the airport has had a temporary FSD for 18 months. The company has the database and technology in place to proceed as soon as we get the TSA green light. If the new FSD allows ExpressJet to use the side door in terminal E, the security line situation should go away.

To put this whole issue into perspective, over 100,000 people a day clear Security at IAH. Fewer than 225 are ExpressJet pilots. That's all I am saying.



**FLIGHT CASE STICKER
OF THE MONTH**

*“Paddle faster,
I hear banjo
music.”*



SLEEPING IN THE CREW ROOM

As you may be aware, management instituted some new rules about using company facilities for overnight accommodations:

“Employees of ExpressJet Airlines are prohibited from using ExpressJet facilities for overnight accommodations. This includes the practice of sleeping overnight in crew rooms, break rooms, locker rooms, and other company facilities.”

The chief pilots were given authority to decide whether or not to post these rules. Here in Houston, our chief has determined this is not an issue, and the rules have not been posted. We are not aware of anyone living in our crew room who has his or her mail delivered there. That is essentially what this boils down to.

If you commute in on the first flight of the day to meet the commuter policy and have significant time until your show, you are welcome and encouraged to hole up in a dark corner and get some rest. This also applies to multihour sits during your pairing or any other time you need to rest.

Rest assured, the crew room is for just that—rest. If you are whipped like we all are lately due to severe understaffing, go ahead and grab some shut-eye.

All of the information contained within *A Reliable Source* is for general knowledge and use. All company information contradicting anything in this publication will be considered controlling.



VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Justin Demer,
Vice Chairman
LEC 175 IAH
Justin.Demer@
alpa.org
(404) 992-9611

DEADHEADING DO'S AND DON'TS

Did you know deadheads are protected by the contract? You can find information about deadheading on pages 31 and 32 in Section 6 of our contract. How many times have you arrived at the gate to find out your deadhead has not been reserved? Unfortunately, you then have to call the travel desk and sit on hold for 25 minutes to obtain a record locator in order to check in for your flight.

Per the contract (refer to Section 6.a.1), an e-ticket boarding pass will be made available by the time the pilot reports for the deadhead assignment. If you arrive at the gate and an e-ticket is not available, you could file a grievance for noncompliance of the contract. In addition, all deadhead pairings should be made available to the pilot no later than 2359 the night before.

Many pilots find themselves deadheading on United Airlines to or from a pairing in IAD or ORD. If your pairing should end in a United Airlines outstation and you choose to return to your base on your own, you will need to get released by Crew Scheduling. If you do not get released at the end of the pairing and Crew Scheduling attempts to reassign you while transiting through IAD or ORD, you will be considered out of position and given a missed trip. To avoid this problem, please contact Crew Scheduling and ask to be released from the end of your pairing. Section 6.d.4 states that a pilot requesting to be released at the end of a trip shall be approved for release unless Crew Scheduling can provide a reasonable explanation for the denial.

REASSIGNED OR JUNIOR MANNED?

Many of you have been rescheduled in the past three weeks. How do you determine if you are rescheduled or junior manned? First, ask Scheduling. If the scheduler says you are reassigned, please reference Section 21.J of the contract, which covers reassignment of a lineholder. Please review these pages; you will want to know the proper rules. There are different rules for reassignment before or after trip origination. As a reminder, all flying beyond the originally scheduled trip termination will be paid at 150 percent.

Assuming Crew Scheduling does not reassign a lineholder, release times will be 15 minutes after block-in or upon completion of any duty assigned by the company (aircraft repositioning, drug or alcohol tests, customs, etc.), whichever is later. There is no debriefing period for deadhead flights unless clearing Customs.

What about reserve pilots? Refer to Section 21.I of the contract. A reserve pilot must contact Crew Scheduling or check the company's computer system for an assignment at the end of the trip debrief. An assignment in the company's computer system or contact by Crew Scheduling at the end of the debriefing is notification of an assignment. If a reserve pilot does not have an assignment by the end of the debriefing, he will be released with Section 3 compensation.

If you have specific questions you would like answered in future editions of *A Reliable Source*, please contact me, and I will do my best to answer them.

*What
about
reserve
pilots?*

DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR REVISIONS ARE?

Sabrina Riffle,
Chairman
Communications
Committee, LEC
175 IAH
Sabrina.Riffle@
alpa.org

Has this ever happened to you? You give yourself plenty of time to get ready, feed the dog, and get out of the house in time to drive the speed limit to the employee lot. However, an accident on the freeway slows your drive. Or you end up taking the last available flight to Houston because the earlier commutes were booked up with unanticipated passengers. In any case, you arrive at the airport late, and you have a choice—walk to the crew room and check your v-file, or go straight to the airplane. Going straight to the airplane is tempting. You can check in with the gate agent, meet the rest of the crew, and complete any duties on time without stress. Besides, you can always go to the crew room later, right? Wrong.

If an ExpressJet check airman or an FAA representative is waiting for you when you get to the airplane, you might be in for a surprise that hurts where it counts—the pocketbook. If you do not have the most current Jeppesen revision, or if you have older revisions that are not posted, you may be found noncompliant and could receive two weeks off without pay and a letter of warning.

Recently, some ExpressJet pilots were found without current and appropriate revisions, and they were sent home. What can you do to prevent this from happening to you? According to the FOM, Pol-5, “pilots are expected to allow enough time prior to trip initiation to post the most recent Jeppesen revision(s) in their manual.”

If an ExpressJet check airman or an FAA representative is waiting for you when you get to the airplane, you might be in for a surprise that hurts where it counts—the pocketbook.

The company requires you to show a minimum of one hour prior to departure time when beginning a trip (reference FOM, Pol-51). The ideal situation is for you to arrive at the airport one hour before departure and post your revisions before walking to the airplane. But what happens if you are late? No matter how late you are for a trip or a turn, you must have the most recent Jeppesen revision in hand. If you are rushed and cannot take the time to file away your revision, you must review and post any new plates for any airports you will be flying to during the pairing (reference FOM, Pol-5). If your schedule is so busy that you cannot post your revisions right away, don't stress. At the very least, “the remainder of the revision must be posted before initiation of the next trip/pairing” (FOM, Pol-5). In addition, if you are coming back from vacation or a period of time off, you must show at the airport earlier than normal and have older revisions posted before the trip begins.

The first step toward consistent and current Jeppesen revisions is meeting these expectations; however, what do you do when you look in your v-file and it is empty?

Remember that the Chief Pilot's Office has a complete set of current Jeppesen revisions.

You check the other files, and it seems like everyone has a revision waiting except you. Or how about this scenario: you begin posting your revision and find that some of the new charts were not included in your particular packet. The first place to look is the cabinet in the crew room where extra revisions are stored. The company orders enough Jeppesen revisions to supply the entire pilot group plus 10 percent; therefore, you should be able to find an extra one somewhere.

If timeliness is not a factor, you can get specific charts or revisions in packet form from the Information Development department at ExpressJet. This department keeps an archive of previous charts. As of this writing, Adrian Healy is the representative you should contact. Adrian can usually get you missing revisions in a few weeks (keep in mind that the company does not guarantee that all previous revisions will be in stock). To order charts or revisions, contact Adrian at (832) 353-3121.

Remember that the Chief Pilot's Office has a complete set of current Jeppesen revisions. If you cannot find the chart you need online or at ExpressJet's corporate office, you can always visit your chief pilot to get a copy.

If you post your revisions on time, you are doing one of the most conscientious and professional tasks an airline pilot can do. If you keep your manuals updated and learn the changes, you can honestly say that you used all of your available skills, knowledge, and heart to keep those passengers safe. There is pride in knowing you did your best. At the very least, posting your revisions early and on time ensures that you will avoid two weeks off without pay. After all, flying and taking pride in your work is much more appealing than eating Top Ramen for two weeks because of a small or nonexistent paycheck.