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Making the Cabin Safer
A Study of Crew Resource Management Training
for Cabin Crew

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Abstract

Crew Resource Management (CRM) is a widely implemented strategy in the aviation community as a training countermeasure to human error. The two most accessible criteria for CRM training evaluation are behaviour on line operation and attitudes showing acceptance or rejection of CRM concepts. The purpose of this research is to investigate CRM training effectiveness for cabin crew, achieved by assessing cabin crew's attitudes toward CRM and their performance during a the training drill.

A questionnaire was created for assessing attitudes toward CRM and CRM training from the flight attendants' perspective at Air New Zealand. Comparing attitudes prior to and post the training suggested that the joint CRM training had a positive effect. The joint CRM training improved cabin crew's confidence in safety operation and commitment to their safety role.

As some factors, such as job position, gender, age, work-year, aircraft type were likely to affect crewmembers' attitudes toward CRM, the survey also tried to test and finally disclosed that at least job position and gender had an effect on cabin crew attitudes.

A series of behavioural markers were developed to measure cabin crew performance during a fire fighting drill. The observation results showed such behavioural markers were useful for assessing flight attendants' CRM skills and indicating the strength and weakness of cabin crew CRM skills showed in the fire fighting drills.

In general the study suggests the overall CRM training in Air New Zealand is successful. It is advised that joint SEP/CRM training needs further concern about the balance of CRM and SEP training. It is also suggested which kinds of CRM skills are critical for cabin crew emergency control.

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