

GHOST

GROUND HANDLING OPERATIONS SAFETY TEAM

Safety in the Balance - Introduction

Astraeus Airlines Captain and legendary Iron Maiden front man, Bruce Dickinson, is the presenter of a brand new flight safety production. Safety in the Balance, which is available free of charge, is part of a joint initiative by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the UK aviation industry to highlight the importance of safe and accurate aircraft loading. <https://youtu.be/ZAGbh8c3zcw>



The DVD, which was released during the summer of 2011, was commissioned by the Ground Handling Operations Safety Team (GHOST), a CAA/industry group committed to develop strategies to mitigate the safety risks from aircraft ground handling and ground support activities. The group is made up of representatives from UK airlines and airport operators.

Jason Sandever, the CAA's Aircraft Loading Inspector, was the focal point of the project. "It was clear we needed to make something that was not only engaging but also related directly to the target audience. Having worked within the ramp environment, I knew we had to do something a bit different." When it came to deciding who would be asked to present the film, Bruce was the obvious choice. "Having seen him in action in another aviation mini-series and knowing that he was a keen enthusiast, I could think of no-one better." In addition to his line flying, Bruce is also a qualified Crew Resource Management Instructor.

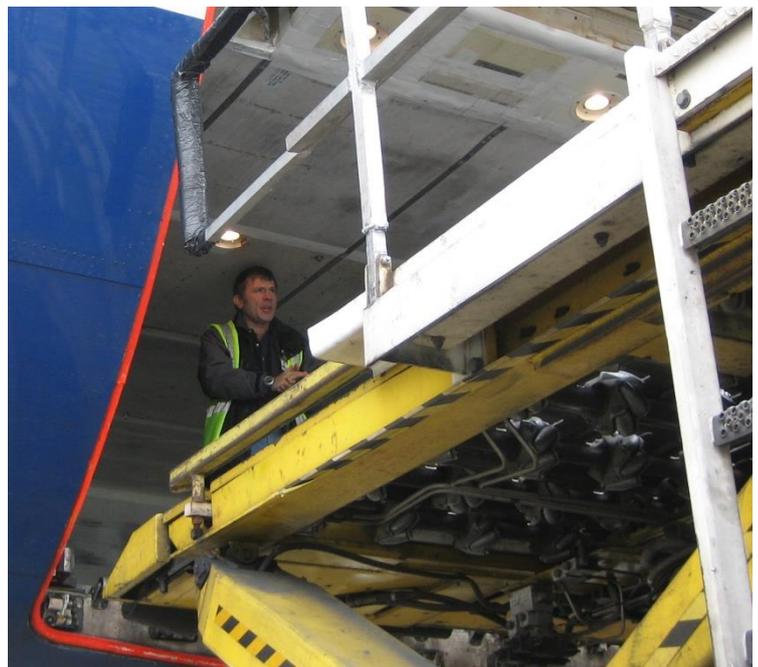
The team then secured the services of some enthusiastic film tutors and students from Exeter College, who throughout 2010, shot scenes at a number of locations including London Heathrow, East Midlands and at Oxford Aviation's Crawley Simulator. Jason said: "The footage jumps deliberately from various locations and aircraft as we wanted to involve as many airlines, ground

handling agents and airports as we could. So, viewers shouldn't get cynical when they see Bruce go up the stairs of an Airbus A340, through a Boeing 747, down the steps of a Boeing 757 and into the cargo hold of an Airbus A321. It was meant to happen like that!"

The film is not intended to replace the need for formal training, rather to compliment it. The general consensus of the GHOST team was that whilst the majority of current training does cover what to do and how to do it, the reason why is often missed.

For Jason, as an ex-Loadmaster, the importance of accurate aircraft loading was brought home in no uncertain terms in the late 1990s, when he was involved with an accident that was the direct result of a gross loading error. Both the crew members on board were killed in the accident. "Once you have experienced that kind of thing, you are left in no doubt that the worst case scenario can and does happen. Sometimes the challenge can be trying to make others believe that the outcome can be more than a paperwork error. It is so important that everyone involved is aware of the potential consequences," he said.

All who watch the film should indeed get an overview of just why it is so important that aircraft are loaded according to a plan, both for cargo, baggage and passengers. Any changes to the load must be reported to the appropriate person and all loads must be restrained. Whilst new and existing ramp personnel are the obvious target audience for the film, it is hoped airlines and airports will screen it for other staff including, dispatch personnel; local and centralised load planners; airline and agent representatives; cargo warehouse employees; commercial departments; airline management; and of course flight deck and cabin crew.



Since the release of Safety in the Balance in mid-June, there have been requests for copies of the DVD from various Training, Safety and Standards Departments around the globe. That's in addition to the worldwide distribution provided by UK based Airlines and Ground Handling Agents. Some of the more interesting requests came from locations such as Hawaii, El Salvador, Greenland, Alberta and Airbus Flight Operations.

Feedback received has shown that Bruce and the team have managed to successfully complete a product that is not only educational but also enjoyable to watch. However, all involved are very aware

that the DVD alone will not change an industry wide problem overnight - so will no doubt remain busy!

As well as the benefit the DVD will bring to those involved in the loading process, the project also brought together many people from different organisations, in many cases forging strong working relationships which the CAA hope will help to improve safety standards in the future.

Safety in the Balance was only made possible with the assistance and continued support of the organisations and individuals involved.

For any related comments, feedback or information please contact GHOST@caa.co.uk