

9 April 2014
FOIA reference: F0001866

Dear XXXX

I am writing in respect of your recent request of 13 March 2014, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your request:

“Can you please tell me:

- a) How many reports of passengers illegally using their mobile phones during flights you have received in the past ten years.*
- b) How many reports of technical problems linked to passengers’ mobile phones you have received in the past ten years”.*

Our response:

In assessing your request in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), we are pleased to be able to provide the information below.

Incident reports are provided to the CAA under the terms of the Mandatory Occurrence Reporting (MOR) scheme, as described under Article 226 of the Air Navigation Order 2009 (ANO). Each report made is reviewed and, where appropriate, further investigation carried out and action taken.

We have, therefore, searched the UK CAA database for all occurrences that have involved the use of mobile phones during flights by passengers regardless of whether there was interference with the aircraft or not during the period of 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2012 inclusive and provided an excel summary of those reports. We have, however, removed identifying information from these reports as this information is exempt from disclosure under section 44 (1) (a) of the FOIA.

Section 44 (1) (a) of the FOIA provides that information is exempt information if its disclosure is prohibited by, or under, any enactment. Under Section 23 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982, information which relates to a particular person (which includes a company or organisation) and has been supplied to the CAA pursuant to an ANO is prohibited from disclosure (a copy of this exemption can be found below).

Civil Aviation Authority

Aviation House GW Gatwick Airport South Crawley West Sussex England RH6 0YR www.caa.co.uk
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Operators have also reported widespread disregard of the requirement to keep mobile phones switched off during taxi-in, which, unless this has resulted in conflict with the cabin crew, will normally not result in an MOR being submitted.

In relation to the second part of your request, it should be noted that nearly all incidents citing mobile phones as a potential cause of interference were never proven.

For more information about the Mandatory Occurrence Reporting scheme, please refer to CAP382 which can be found at www.caa.co.uk/cap382. The CAA has also published a briefing entitled 'Flying with Gadgets' which can be found at:

<http://www.caa.co.uk/application.aspx?catid=33&pagetype=65&appid=11&mode=detail&id=5752>

If you are not satisfied with how we have dealt with your request in the first instance you should approach the CAA in writing at:-

Mark Stevens
External Response Manager
Civil Aviation Authority
Aviation House
Gatwick Airport South
West Sussex
RH6 0YR

mark.stevens@caa.co.uk

The CAA has a formal internal review process for dealing with appeals or complaints in connection with Freedom of Information requests. The key steps in this process are set in the attachment.

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you have a right under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act to appeal against the decision by contacting the Information Commissioner at:-

Information Commissioner's Office
FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
www.ico.gov.uk/complaints.aspx

Should you wish to make further Freedom of Information requests, please use the e-form at <http://www.caa.co.uk/foi>.

Yours sincerely

Rick Chatfield
Information Rights and Enquiries Officer

CAA INTERNAL REVIEW & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- The original case to which the appeal or complaint relates is identified and the case file is made available;
- The appeal or complaint is allocated to an Appeal Manager, the appeal is acknowledged and the details of the Appeal Manager are provided to the applicant;
- The Appeal Manager reviews the case to understand the nature of the appeal or complaint, reviews the actions and decisions taken in connection with the original case and takes account of any new information that may have been received. This will typically require contact with those persons involved in the original case and consultation with the CAA Legal Department;
- The Appeal Manager concludes the review and, after consultation with those involved with the case, and with the CAA Legal Department, agrees on the course of action to be taken;
- The Appeal Manager prepares the necessary response and collates any information to be provided to the applicant;
- The response and any necessary information is sent to the applicant, together with information about further rights of appeal to the Information Commissioners Office, including full contact details.

Freedom of Information Act: Section 44

(1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure (otherwise than under this Act) by the public authority holding it-

- (a) is prohibited by or under any enactment,
- (b) is incompatible with any Community obligation, or
- (c) would constitute or be punishable as a contempt of court.

(2) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if the confirmation or denial that would have to be given to comply with section 1(1)(a) would (apart from this Act) fall within any of paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1).

Section 23 of the Civil Aviation Act is such a statutory prohibition. Accordingly, the obligations of the CAA to comply with Section 23 are unaffected by the Freedom of Information Act.

Under Section 23, information supplied to the CAA in connection with its regulatory functions and which relates to a particular individual or organisation must not be disclosed by the CAA unless such disclosure is authorised by one of the exceptions contained in Section 23 itself.

File number	UTC date	Headline	Narrative text
200301761	19/03/2003	Altimeter setting error, due to crew distraction.	The aircraft levelled at 11000ft (FL106), 1030mb rather than FL110 on 1013mb. ATC questioned the level, the error was discovered and the aircraft climbed to the correct altitude. The reporter notes the crew were being distracted at the time by difficulties in receiving transmissions due to mobile telephone (PED) interference.
200306311	19/08/2003	Passenger using mobile phone during cruise.	
200306488	12/09/2003	Passenger using mobile telephone in flight.	Shortly after take-off, a member of the cabin crew heard a mobile telephone ringing and noted a passenger flip it open. The passenger was asked to turn it off but required a Spanish speaking crew member to explain; the passenger was claiming "she was just using the alarm".
200401587	15/03/2004	Disruptive passenger.	Passenger allegedly failed to comply with safety instructions to turn off his mobile telephone, conducting himself in a disorderly manner, making references to a bomb and during the approach and landing, standing while opening / searching overhead lockers instead of being seated in his allocated seat with the seatbelt fastened. He has been charged with Breaches of the Peace and contravention of the ANO/Civil Aviation Act.
200402653	22/04/2004	Disruptive passengers.	Passenger was seen to be smoking while in her seat, with cigarette ends found in a drinks miniature, while teenage children travelling with her were threatening and abusive towards other passengers. One of the children was also found writing a text message on a mobile telephone (PED). On arrival, the aircraft was met by police, who removed the family.
200402851	08/05/2004	Disruptive and abusive passenger.	After a nearly full bottle of lager was taken from the passenger during boarding, he was subsequently verbally and physically abusive to a member of the female cabin crew before he and another male passenger shouted foul language at each other as the safety demonstration commenced. He then proceeded to use a mobile telephone before being persuaded to turn it off. During the flight he, and the other male passenger, were found to have been smoking in a toilet. Flight crew requested security assistance on landing and the two passengers were escorted off the aircraft by police. The passenger was later charged.
200405517	04/08/2004	Disruptive passenger.	Cabin crew assisted a passenger looking for a watch, which he initially claimed had been taken from his bag, before threatening that no-one would leave the aircraft until it was found. Due to his agitated behaviour, cabin crew decided they would not serve him any more alcohol. He was then verbally abusive to other passengers, prior to claiming to cabin crew that he could survive a jump from the aircraft, without oxygen, from 37000ft. He then became physically abusive to a female member of the cabin crew before lunging at an aircraft door as if attempting to open it. He then went to a toilet, was found smoking and threatened cabin crew when using the interphone to the Captain. Flight crew then requested police assistance on arrival. After taking his seat again, he was seen trying to use his mobile telephone but when trying to turn it off, it fell to pieces, providing a member of the cabin crew an opportunity to confiscate the battery. When on the ground, he became so threatening, the SCC, in fear of her safety, sought refuge in the flight deck. The door was opened by another member of the cabin crew and the passenger fled into the waiting police, who arrested him.
200406438	09/09/2004	Deportee passenger denied boarding. Removed from aircraft.	As an immigration deportee was escorted to the aircraft as the last passenger to board, he began protesting, shouting and wished to use his mobile telephone. As he failed to heed warnings given to him by security / immigration officers, the flight crew, at this point, deemed him to be disruptive. The deportee was then offloaded and escorted to the terminal. Flight dispatched and continued without further incident.
200406541	08/09/2004	Disruptive passenger.	Male passenger seated in 53E began behaving in a very antisocial manner after taking sleeping pills/medication and alcohol. He became increasingly abusive to the cabin crew and significantly disruptive to those passengers in his immediate vicinity. Ops control contacted via Sat phone and informed of a level one disruptive passenger. Police attended the aircraft on arrival.
200406899	01/08/2004	Passenger using mobile phone (PED) during descent.	Passenger's mobile phone rang during descent and the passenger switched the phone off. Cabin crew explained to the passenger the problems of use of mobile phones in flight.
200500725	28/01/2005	Passenger observed using a mobile phone and "playing" with cigarette lighters.	When the passenger was told to turn off the mobile phone (PED) he denied having one. He was also told to put the lighters away but was reluctant to do so and intimidated other passengers. Arrangements were made for the police to escort the offending passenger from the aircraft on arrival.
200502291	31/03/2005	Disruptive, intoxicated passenger offloaded.	The ground handling agent reported that a passenger smelt of alcohol. The cabin crew initially assessed that the passenger was fit to fly, however, during taxi-out he refused to turn off his mobile phone and became disruptive. The police were summoned and the passenger was offloaded.
200504289	07/06/2005	PAN declared. A suspect article (a mobile phone hidden between seats in row 17) was found. A/c declared a PAN and subsequently diverted to Stansted where appropriate action was taken.	
200505855	18/07/2005	Passenger using mobile telephone whilst airborne.	Passenger's mobile telephone rang when on finals, with the passenger answering the call. When told to turn it off by crew, she refused. Crew member demanded she hand over the telephone before removing the battery and returning the telephone. Battery withheld until after landing.

200507751	16/09/2005	Disruptive/abusive passenger. Police met aircraft on arrival.	During cruise a passenger became physically and verbally abusive towards the cabin crew after being refused the sale of alcohol. A verbal warning was given by the cabin manager followed by a formal warning from the P1. Later in the flight the passenger activated his mobile phone (PED) and refused to turn it off when instructed to do so. The police were requested and attended the aircraft on arrival.
200507817	19/09/2005	Passenger smoking in toilet - smoke detector tampered with. Passenger escorted off the aircraft by police at destination.	The cabin crew reported that a passenger had been smoking in the toilet. The waste bin was doused with water and frequent checks of the toilet carried out. The cabin crew had strong suspicions of who the passenger was but no proof. A PA announcement was made emphasising the risk to the aircraft and the 'No Smoking' policy and that, if caught, the passenger would be denied return carriage. Later in the flight the passenger suspected of smoking was heard to say "I don't care - I'm going to have another one". When this passenger visited the toilet again, the cabin crew knocked on the door and when it was opened there was a strong smell of smoke and cigarette ash in the sink. A packet of cigarettes was found and the smoke detector had been tampered with. The passenger denied smoking, stating that it had been the passenger before her and that she had gone to the toilet to make a telephone call (this in itself being an offence). After landing, the passenger became aggressive towards the cabin manager and the police were called to escort the passenger from the aircraft. Operations were consulted with regard to refusal of return carriage. (PED)
200601818	01/03/2006	Passenger, allegedly drunk, failed to follow cabin crew requests.	A passenger, who had previously been refused boarding due to alcohol, refused to switch off his mobile telephone and was generally abusive towards cabin crew. A ¾ empty bottle of whisky was removed from him. The aircraft returned to the stand where it was met by police and the passenger was offloaded.
200602492	27/03/2006	Disruptive passenger.	Persistently disruptive passenger "caused a rumpus", using his cell phone and causing considerable upset to a nearby family. He failed to moderate his behaviour despite numerous warnings. Police met the aircraft who "then dealt with the said youth".
200603350	08/04/2006	DHC8 crew requested police meet a/c on stand, due to two passengers allegedly acting suspiciously. Police attended a/c and disembarked the two passengers.	It is alleged that the passengers had written a name and telephone number on the back of a seat as well as using mobile phones and taking pictures of the inside of the a/c and passing scenery.
200604364	25/05/2006	It is alleged that three passengers were acting suspiciously onboard an RJ100. Police and immigration met the a/c on landing and a thorough search of the a/c was conducted.	Cabin crew had notified the crew that these three passengers were allegedly acting suspiciously before take-off at Madrid, which had led to the flight being delayed. Then during the flight the crew reported allegedly seeing the passengers changing seats, taking off their shoes to go to the toilet and using their mobile phones.
200605182	17/06/2006	Disruptive passengers allegedly caused several breaches of the ANO. Police requested to meet aircraft on arrival.	During cruise 2 passengers were disruptive and abusive to the crew and allegedly consumed their own alcohol to the point of intoxication. They also used mobile phones in flight and were suspected of smoking in the toilet. Police assistance was requested for arrival at destination because they were members of a party of over 12 males. Return carriage declined.
200703992	02/05/2007	Passenger disturbance whilst a/c taxiing onto stand. Police attended and escorted passenger and accompanying party from a/c.	Party of passengers persistently failed to comply with requests to turn their mobile phones off during the flight.
200707443	05/08/2007	Radio interference - attributed to passenger using their mobile phone (PED) who then became abusive when instructed to switch it off.	A female passenger seated in 16A was sending text messages during flight. She called a member of the CC to enquire of an ETA to Geneva. The crew member instructed her to switch off her phone, which she initially refused but eventually did so. The passenger was allegedly rude to the CC and, when admonished by the purser, used obscene language. At the same time as the passenger was texting the flight crew were aware of interference over the radio, almost certainly caused by the mobile phone.
200708541	02/09/2007	Disruptive passengers.	The dispatcher advised the cabin crew of a number of male passengers who were in high spirits but sober. During take off, one of the passengers was observed making mobile telephone calls and refused to obey cabin crew instructions. Members of the group displayed abusive behaviour towards the cabin crew and other passengers. Several disruptive passenger warning notices issued but they were not taken seriously. Six of the passengers were handed to police on arrival. The passengers were described as "being about 7ft tall" and were allegedly basket ball players.
200710417	20/10/2007	Burning smell reported from seat 60J. Crew isolated seat power and smell dissipated. Investigation on arrival revealed a mobile phone (PED) burnt out and crushed in the seat recline mechanism guide rail.	Seat tested. No defects found. Alleged that this type of incident has happened before.
200710479	19/10/2007	Smoke observed from seat in Club class. Recline system jammed. Seat power isolated by cabin crew and smoke ceased. No fire extinguishers needed or used.	CAA Closure: Operator discovered the smoke was due to a loose article, (a passenger's mobile phone), which had become lodged in the seat mechanism.

200801005	31/01/2008	PAN declared due to violent and disruptive passenger. Passenger escorted off aircraft by police on arrival.	During cruise a passenger who appeared to be drunk and drinking own alcohol used abusive language and attempted to use a mobile phone. Passenger warned by crew and alcohol confiscated. Later, level of abuse increased and passenger became violent, fighting with other passengers/cabin crew and refused to calm down. Passenger did eventually calm down for a short time following a PA from Captain but then resumed violent behaviour (including threat to hijack the aircraft) and was restrained by other passengers. Flight continued to destination (due to non availability of suitable diversion airfields) with passenger being restrained with difficulty due to constant struggling and abusive behaviour. PAN declared and priority landing requested. After landing disruptive passenger escorted off aircraft by police.
200803239	29/03/2008	Passenger observed to be talking on mobile (PED) during aircraft refuelling. Refused to switch off mobile when asked and shouted at crew member. Police called. He was then apologetic.	
200809180	22/08/2008	Passenger disruption.	Immediately after landing, two passengers started insulting each other and their entourage. One of the passengers then insulted the cabin crew. Police called, who arrived at the aircraft after 20 minutes. Official complaint made against the passengers by the Captain. Argument allegedly started due to one passenger asking the other to turn off a mobile telephone (PED) just before landing.
200809943	23/08/2008	Passenger caught smoking in rear toilet. When challenged, passenger became very aggressive. Same passenger also refused to turn off mobile phone. Police met a/c and issued verbal warning.	
200810741	24/09/2008	Abusive passengers.	Passenger talking to other passengers in a very aggravated and erratic manor and behaving very strangely. Shortly after take-off, she attempted to use her mobile telephone. She then asked for alcohol on several occasions but this was refused by cabin crew. In a separate incident on the following sector of the same flight, another passenger was refused alcohol by cabin crew. He was verbally abusive, then returned to his seat and went to sleep for five hours.
200811898	28/10/2008	Disruptive/aggressive passenger due to dispute over use of mobile phone. Police escorted passenger off aircraft on arrival.	Disruptive passenger threatened another passenger after he had informed cabin crew about his use of a mobile phone (PED) whilst in flight.
200813393	16/12/2008	Abusive/aggressive passenger offloaded.	During taxi out, apparently intoxicated passenger became abusive and aggressive when asked to place his bag in an overhead locker and to stop using his mobile phone. A/c returned to stand, police called and offending passenger offloaded.
200901209	05/02/2009	Disruptive/abusive passenger due to dispute over use of mobile phone (PED).	
200901895	01/03/2009	Disruptive passenger.	A passenger asked the crew if he could use his mobile telephone. When told he could not, he became aggressive and tried to use the telephone in the toilet. He was aggressively shouting and spat at the crew as well as frightening other passengers.
200908262	06/08/2009	Disruptive/abusive passenger. Passenger refused to obey crew commands, used mobile phone (PED) during taxi then forced entry onto flight deck by physically pushing SCCM. Police called to meet aircraft.	
201008694	15/08/2010	Disruptive passenger, abusive and aggressive towards the cabin crew.	Passenger refused to show paper boarding pass and mobile phone boarding was invalid. During flight, same passenger attempted to use toilet during a turbulence encounter with seat belt signs switched on becoming rude and aggressive once more when approached. Passenger warned about behaviour.
201103776	05/04/2011	Passenger under influence of medication and alcohol. Ignoring instructions to return to seat and turn off mobile phone (PED).	
201104016	15/04/2011	Cabin staff reporting acrid smell coming from vicinity of seat 15A. No sign of fire or smoke. Seat power isolated. Smell reduced. Burnt out mobile phone (PED) discovered in base of seat by engineering.	
201105541	21/05/2011	Interference by telephone conversation heard on active frequency. Cabin crew advise a mobile phone (PED) being used by elderly passenger which they confiscated.	

201108029	13/07/2011	Passenger observed to have written inappropriate comments by way of a mobile phone text message during taxi out. Deemed by the crew to be a security issue. A/c returned to stand. Passenger offloaded.	Police attended the a/c. A/c security checked.
201112122	01/10/2011	Passenger's I Phone (PED) fell down between Club World seat, became crushed and started to smoke.	I Phone removed, battery cooled and smoke disappeared. BCF not required.
201200148	06/01/2012	Disgruntled passenger made verbal telephone threats specific to an individual airline operator's a/c . Appropriate action taken.	
201207040	22/06/2012	Passenger iphone (PED) dropped and caught in seat mechanism.	The passenger's seat was struck halfway to the upright take-off position. The engineer dis-assembled the seat and discovered the phone was caught between the moving mechanisms which had left the phone completely distorted. The Li-ion battery was cut in half which could have posed a fire hazard as well as the broken glass from the screen.
201209968	20/08/2012	Cabin crew member found passenger iPhone (PED) on charge in toilet.	It was hidden in the toilet seat cover compartment and the phone was hot to touch, with a charging lead in the power socket. Passenger identified.
201302607	12/03/2013	Passenger using mobile phone on final approach refused to comply with cabin crew requests and became physically and verbally abusive. Police called and attended a/c on arrival.	
201312258	25/09/2013	Two disruptive passengers, one repeatedly rested his feet on slide container of door 1L despite cabin crew instructions.	The passenger taunted cabin crew about what would happen if he lifted the door handle. Refused to fasten seatbelt and switch off mobile phone and both were verbally abusive towards the crew. Police attended the aircraft on arrival.
201315573	29/11/2013	Disruptive passenger, using mobile phone.	Passenger refused to turn off mobile phone (PED) on landing and CM made several requests which passenger ignored. Was so intent on using phone was not listening to commands in the cabin. CM asked Captain to chat to passenger, not interested in Captain either.