



Global Cabin Air Quality Executive

(GCAQE)

GCAQE Press Release

Immediate release

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UK Government Air Monitoring studies flawed putting passengers and crew at further risk.

The Global Cabin Air Quality Executive (GCAQE) is the leading organisation globally representing air crew with regard to cabin air quality, specifically contaminated air issues, consisting of over 20 organisations, representing 500,000 aviation workers globally.

The GCAQE is pleased that the UK Government recognises there is an issue with aircraft air quality but believes action to protect the public is needed rather than further research. Research and sponsored sampling being arranged by the UK Department of Transport (DfT) is seriously flawed for reasons which include:

- The DfT monitoring research was not put out to tender, despite earlier assurances by the UK Government that the work would go out to an open tender.
- The organisations involved in the research should all reveal how much revenue / income they receive each year from aerospace companies to demonstrate if they can be classified as 'independent'.
- Some of the sampling methods utilized are flawed whilst others are not fully available for review as they are said to be commercial 'intellectual property' of BRE.
- The sampling techniques being used are inadequate to detect aerosols and mists and have focused on vapors only. This seriously underestimates exposure. (Winder 2008) The serious flaws in the research were highlighted by the US FAA funded air monitoring researchers who were asked by Cranfield University to review their initial functionality report. The serious flaws are in fact listed in the Cranfield University's own report: (<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/aviation/hci/cabinairsamplingstudy.pdf>)
- Ground based safe levels of chemicals cannot be applied to an aircraft setting and as such interpretation of UK Government monitoring to date has been flawed.
- The Government's sampling programme comes as a result of a recommendation of the UK Committee of Toxicity (COT). COT failed to appropriately review the evidence that was given to it and is just a further delaying tactic which fails to protect the traveling people from exposure to contaminated air.
- Jim Fitzpatrick MP, the UK Parliamentary Under Secretary of State advises '*as yet we do not know what if anything it may be desirable to filter out. Therefore the logical first step must be to try and find out what substances are in a cabin fume event.*' This is pure misinformation as the evidence is there showing steps which need to be taken to protect the public and working crews. A year long Australian Senate investigation concluded there was a problem with contaminated air exposures, so why is the Government not protecting the travelling public? Why has the government not even taken any steps to ensure all passengers are informed when they have been exposed?
- The UK COT report and statements made by Jim Fitzpatrick MP, have failed to look at international monitoring studies that have taken place over the past 20 years and which have clearly identified the

engine oil antiwear additive, tricresyl phosphate (TCP), an organophosphate; in the cabin air, cabin ductwork, and swab samples of aircraft cabins and in pilots' blood. Some of those that have previously found TCP in these ways include: RAAF (1988, 2005); Allied Signal/Honeywell (1997, 2000); various airlines and the CAA (2004). Additionally the DfT funded Cranfield University monitoring studies, although inadequately undertaken, found TCP in the cabin air.

- Jim Fitzpatrick MP, inappropriately advises that previous studies such as the European CabinAir project have shown the suitability of cabin air in terms of chemical contaminants. The European CabinAir project did NOT use contaminated air (bleed air) as part of its research and as such contaminated air from oil and hydraulic fluids were not examined. This being another example of how the Government misinforms the public and MPs.
- The UK Government estimates that fume events are reported to occur in 1% (1 per 100 flights) of flights, however this severely underestimates the number of contaminated air exposures which research shows are rarely reported (less than 4% of events are reported by pilots) at all.

The Government must no longer delay taking action to prevent contaminated air events occurring; stating that to date there is no evidence that has 'convinced any government or regulatory authority' of passenger risk.

Air Passengers and airline crews remain at serious risk from exposure to aircraft contaminated air, even though solutions are currently available to greatly reduce this problem. The GCAQE urges the international aviation industry to call for the precautionary principle to be adhered to by way of immediate fitting of bleed air filters to filter out known contaminants of concern as there is enough evidence to show the duty of care approach must be adopted. Other solutions must no longer be delayed waiting for Government's and aviation regulator's to act.

Notes:

1. The Global Cabin Air Quality Executive (GCAQE) head researcher, Captain Susan Michaelis has recently published the 844 page only collated source of material on the 5 decade old contaminated air issue: S.Michaelis (2007) Aviation Contaminated Air Reference Manual. ISBN 9780955567209.

www.susanmichaelis.com

2. The RAAF review of the 'Aviation Contaminated Air Reference Manual' includes statements such as:

- *'first-ever comprehensive and definitive attempt to document and encapsulate the problem of aircraft cabin air quality'*
- *'ground-breaking and seminal work'*
- *'A notable and distressing element of the data is the widespread prevalence of denial of the existence of the problem, particularly among the aircraft operators and aviation regulators'*

3. GCAQE reiterates it's call for a public inquiry into the UK Government's inappropriate handling of the cabin air contamination issue. (http://www.gcaqe.org/article_march2008.html)

4. GCAQE calls for effective 'bleed air' filtration and detection systems (to warn crews of when the air is contaminated) to be mandated on all commercial passenger aircraft using 'bleed air' as a matter of urgency.

5. Winder (2008): Critique of DfT/Cranfield University monitoring study: refer www.gcaqe.org

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A global coalition of health and safety advocates committed to raising awareness and finding solutions to poor air quality in aircraft.

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