



FUI DIVERTED? PILOTS ARRESTED ON SUSPICION OF BEING DRUNK, POLICE SAY

News / Airlines



Two pilots' alleged tippling delayed a trans-Atlantic Air Transat flight and landed the crew members in jail, police and the airline said.

The Montreal-based airline delayed a flight from Glasgow, Scotland, to Toronto on Monday, to the consternation of passengers -- though some changed their tune upon learning that they'd potentially dodged a disaster by not taking off with the reportedly drunken pilots.

The flight covers about 3,300 miles and takes roughly seven hours. It was rescheduled for Tuesday morning, said Kathryn Munro, Air Transat's UK spokeswoman.

Police Scotland did not release the pilots' names but said "two men aged 39 and 37 years have been arrested in relation to being allegedly impaired through alcohol under the Railway and Transport Safety Act 2003."

The airline, too, provided scarce details. At first, it said it had "learned of the arrest of two crew members assigned to its Glasgow-Toronto flight."

Later, it released a statement saying safety was a top priority and it would "await the results of the investigation and judicial proceedings before commenting on the matter."

While specifics were still unclear Tuesday, CNN partner CBC News cited Scottish police in reporting that the captain of the flight, 37, and his first officer, 39, were taken into custody after the cabin crew became alarmed by their behavior before Flight TS725 took off with roughly 250 passengers on board.

The men were scheduled to appear in Paisley Sheriff Court, west of Glasgow, on Tuesday. The men will face a charge of being impaired, Police Scotland said, according to CBC.

Air Transat's Twitter feed handled several tweets from peeved passengers, offering them hotel accommodations, dinner and a \$200 credit. That wasn't enough to allay some passengers' frustrations.

According to its website, the Canadian airline annually ferries about 3 million passengers among 60 destinations aboard Boeing and Airbus jets. The company boasts about 2,500 employees.

There have been a few examples of airline employees behaving badly this year, including incidents involving pimping, and drug and currency smuggling.

In March, an American Airlines co-pilot was arrested at Detroit Metropolitan Airport after failing two sobriety tests, police said.

Last year, police said they arrested an air traffic controller at Springdale Municipal Airport in Arkansas when a pilot received no response from the tower after repeated requests for clearance to taxi. An employee found the air traffic controller "passed out in his chair with his shirt off," according to a police report.

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