



SWISS: TWO-PERSONS-IN-THE-COCKPIT RULE TO BE ABOLISHED

News / Airlines



Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS) is to abolish its present two-persons-in-the-cockpit rule, with effect from 1 May. The action follows an extensive safety and security review which has concluded that the rule, which was introduced as a precautionary measure in 2015, does not enhance flight safety. SWISS also meets all the requirements demanded by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) of any airline seeking to abolish the rule. The action is being taken in close coordination with SWISS's fellow member airlines of the Lufthansa Group.

SWISS is to abolish the present so-called “two-persons-in-the-cockpit” rule from 1 May, and will revert to its previous cockpit access provisions plus a number of additional safety and security measures. The action is being taken following a structured safety, security and risk analysis that has been conducted by the carrier and coordinated with similar risk assessments by its fellow Lufthansa Group airlines.

These analyses have concluded that the requirement of having two crew members in the cockpit at all times during a flight does not enhance safety, and actually introduces additional risks to daily

operations in flight safety terms (such as the fact that the rule results in more and longer openings of the cockpit door). SWISS also meets all the requirements demanded by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) of any airline seeking to abolish the rule:

ensuring suitable selection criteria and procedures to assess the psychological and safety-relevant demands made on pilots;

ensuring stable employment terms and conditions for cockpit personnel;

giving pilots (easy) access to any psychological or other support programmes they may need;

demonstrating an ability as a company to minimize the psychological and social risks to which pilots are exposed, such as loss of licence.

SWISS's decision to abolish its present two-persons-in-the-cockpit rule is supported by the Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation, and is also being taken in close coordination with the further airlines of the Lufthansa Group.

Two-persons-in-the-cockpit rule introduced as a temporary measure in 2015

SWISS and its fellow Lufthansa Group airlines made precautionary modifications to their already high cockpit safety and security measures following the Germanwings tragedy in March 2015. As a result of those events and in line with a safety recommendation from EASA, SWISS decided that two crew members had to be in the aircraft's cockpit at all times during a flight. So if one of the two pilots left the cockpit at any time, their place had to be temporarily taken by another crew member. After extensively analyzing the experience gained with the new requirement, EASA revised its recommendation in summer 2016, offering airlines the option of abolishing this "two-persons-in-the-cockpit" rule provided they met the relevant further criteria.

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