



ARE THESE FLIGHT ATTENDANTS REALLY TOO HEAVY?

News / Airlines



Six months ago, Air India warned 600 of its 3500 flight attendants to lose weight and declared them "temporarily unfit" for their duties.

That's nearly a whopping fifth of their entire cabin crew workforce.

And now it has announced that it will permanently ground 130 of the group who failed to shed enough kilos to place their BMI (Body Mass Index) under 22.

But being "overweight" in the world of Air India is very different to real life, with airline considering a range of 18-22 "normal", 22-27 "overweight" and over 27 "obese" for their female flight attendants.

For male cabin crew it's a different story, with the ranges of 18 -25 considered normal, 25-30 overweight, and anything above 30 obese.

Meanwhile, for the rest of the world it's widely acknowledged that 22 is a healthy BMI level - with the Department of Health listing 18.5-24.99 as a normal, healthy weight range.

Even so, health experts have argued that the use of the BMI calculator alone is not an accurate measurement of whether someone is of healthy weight. As reported in the Courier Mail, a study earlier this year into the size and shape of Australian women aged 18-44 found that almost one-third of participants were miscalculated as obese using the BMI alone - but were within the guidelines for percentage of body fat.

Despite concerns about the accuracy of using BMI as a measure of health, during the last six months, the "overweight" group had to undergo clinical examinations, change their diet and exercise more - while being monitored by staff.

"About 130 of them failed the reassessment," an Air India official told the UK's Telegraph. "We are now declaring them permanently unfit for their job as flight attendants."

Their reasoning?

"People who are fitter can respond quicker and more efficiently in case of any untoward situation."

Air India also grounded 10 crew for the same reason, back in 2009. It also controversially argued in 2013 that employing only female flight attendants could save it hundreds of thousands of dollars, as they weigh less.

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