

# Hotel Updates



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Another month has passed, and we have more good news on some hotel changes. Unfortunately, other areas of the Committee’s responsibility have not gone as well. I will bring you up to date on our recent activities and future plans.

Let me begin with the crew meals, since I did not talk about them in the last article. The person I had been dealing with in Dining and Cabin Services has been assigned to another job, and I am working with the new person to get him up to speed. The major problem is twofold. First, some catering companies seem to be ignoring the new menus our company sent out. I understood that all catering companies would be able to follow the new menus for the price set. Even though we worked with LSG to cost out the meals, the other companies should be able to produce the same meal for the same cost. The best way for us to keep track of this is to receive reports from the crews. The other issue involves the timely delivery of the meals, which is a function of both the station and Dining and Cabin Services. Again, when your meals are late, we need to know about it.

For far too long, we have been unsuccessful in persuading our management to rewrite the computer program that inserts the crew meals in our trips. I submitted an agenda item for the third quarter MEC meeting requesting an MEC grievance over the lack of progress on this point. The Contract is quite clear on when we are entitled to a crew meal. In past meetings, our middle management provided no evidence that we are wrong in our interpretation. They

simply failed to implement the promised changes required to comply with our contract. For those of you who may not remember the contractual provisions, Section 5(I) states:

1. The Company will provide pilot meals, appropriately selected for the time of day, for each on-duty period scheduled in excess of six (6) hours and which does not have a scheduled ground time between flight segments of at least sixty (60) minutes. The contents of such meal will be determined by the Company after consultation with the MEC Crew Meal Committee (*i.e. Crew Accommodations Committee*).
2. Breakfast-type pilot meals will be boarded on flights which depart a regularly catered station between 0100-0700 local, excluding “continuous on-duty pairings”, and the initial flight within a trip pairing departing a pilot’s domicile.
3. At a non-catered layover station, for flights originating between 0100-0700 local, excluding “continuous on-duty pairings”, a breakfast-type meal or snack (such as cereal or fruit) will be provided either at the layover hotel or airport.

That is it on crew meals in our contract. Nowhere does the Contract restrict us to only one meal per duty period. The current computer program implements just such a restriction. So, if you receive a breakfast meal and then do not have a one-hour break for 12 hours, there is no meal inserted in the trip. Also, for some reason the program will at times insert the meals when needed, and other times skip over a meal. No

one seems to know why. Hopefully, the grievance process will encourage the Company to finally move on this issue.

The crew room issue is a little bit different. There seems to be many departments involved in our crew rooms, making it tough to get anything done. Again, Section 5(A), Lodging, of our contract states:

1. Pilots shall be furnished suitable rest facilities by the Company when on duty. Suitable rest facilities shall mean facilities which are private and quiet and are not in working or traffic areas . . . .

We have tried to work with our management on locating crew rooms where they are needed. You will notice the Contract says nothing about crew bases. Since there are many stations where we have no productivity breaks, we do not need a crew lounge in every station. However, trying to get lounges in cities such as RDU, TPA, FLL, EWR, and something suitable in MCO, has gone nowhere. I do not know how that paragraph could be interpreted in any other way. Since management will not work with us in cities where we know we need something, perhaps they will work with us in the grievance arena. I also asked the MEC to file a grievance

over this issue at the third quarter meeting, and will update you in my next article.

Let me move on to some hotel updates. Last month I discussed the work being done in Tampa for our long and short overnights. We no longer stay in town at the Holiday Inn for any overnight. For our longest overnights, we will stay at the Hilton in St. Petersburg. We are limited to 25 rooms at the Hilton, which should work out nicely. While we realize it is a long drive, the Hilton's 25-room limit should restrict overnights in St. Petersburg to layovers exceeding 16 hours. Once we reach the 25-room limit, the remainder of the crews, including those on short overnights, will be housed at the Doubletree, which has just completed their renovation. Since we had to endure much of the renovation process, we should be able to enjoy the finished product.

On October 1, our short overnights in Columbia, S.C., moved to the Sheraton. The drive is a bit longer, but the quality of the hotel should more than make up for the drive.

I also reported last month that I was planning an inspection trip to MCI. This trip went quite well, and generated several choices for our short overnights. Starting October 1, crews started using the Hilton Airport for the short

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### *Disapproval List*

**DAY long**—Overnights have returned to DAY. The hotel is making some changes, but not enough to keep us.

**ERIE**—We use the same hotel for long and short overnights. Now that we have some of the cities cleaned up, it is time to clean up this hotel.

**LAX (Culver City hotels)**—These hotels might be OK for shorts, or as long as up to 15 hours. Over that length, we are putting way too many overnights in this area. We need to redo all LAX hotels.

### *Watch List*

**DEN transportation**—Bel Air had quite a few problems in July and early August. They did make some changes, but will they stick? Please let us know about the service.

**ABE long**—This hotel is in poor shape. We are looking for an alternative.

**CHS long**—The location for long overnights is very poor. We have not had enough traffic to justify two hotels. We will review options again this fall.

We had a very good month for 310 forms and e-mails. The total count was 104. Of those, three addressed hotels that have been changed, two reflected positive comments, and three dealt with crew meals. Off of the Disapproval List are the CLE short Ramada, IND Quality/Ramada, and the MYR Landmark, as we will be out of these hotels soon.

***“ We need to hear about the repeat problems, even as frequently as every week. That is how we can spot problems. In addition, you will be beating us over the head with the forms. ”***

overnights. We used this hotel in the past, but had to leave due to problems with the hotel management. Since the Hilton is under new ownership and management, our crews will find a welcome change.

By November 1, we also ceased using the Landmark Hotel in Myrtle Beach. Everyone will stay at the Hampton. While the Hampton lacks a beachfront location and offers limited services, we will be leaving a hotel that has deteriorated considerably in quality for a better hotel that offers more choices for restaurants, shopping, and movies. We generally try to find full service hotels for our crews. However, Myrtle Beach posed a big problem because of the strong summer traffic. Trying to stay in full-service hotels left us with an option such as the Landmark. After reviewing the 310 forms, I noted that crews strongly preferred the Hampton over the Landmark.

Mentioning the 310 forms gives me a great lead into my next topic. Your committee relies upon the 310 forms in order to develop a working list of what cities need inspections, decide whether to renew contracts with hotels, and watch for trends at hotels and transportation companies. Receiving only one form does not enable us to identify a trend. If you are in a city and have a problem one week, fill out the form. If you are back there in a week or two and you run into the same problem, fill out the form. We need to hear about the repeat problems, even as frequently as every week. That is how we can spot problems.

For example, I received one complaint this summer about the van times in Boston. It seems we are leaving from the long overnight hotels an

hour and a half before departure. Our crews arrive at the airport over one hour before departure. Since I do not think we can do much work without an aircraft, we need to know about this. I do not want to spend any more time than I have to waiting for an aircraft, the gate agents to show up, or security to open up so we may get to the aircraft. Letting us know your arrival times at the airport in relation to when you can actually get to work is to everyone's benefit. One report might not reflect the normal travel time for that city, but 10 to 15 reports that include the time leaving the hotel, time arriving at the airport, and flight numbers really helps us make the case for changing the van times. We rely on the van companies to help set the van times because they drive the route daily. If the van companies are also trying to set time too early just to be able to combine crews, or use the same van for two different crews by making a round trip, we need to know that also.

Bottom line again on the 310 forms: your committee needs you to fill them out. Your committee will not judge you as a whiner if you fill them out. Without your help, we cannot be as effective as we would like.

Well, that is it for another month. Please continue to let your committee know, via the 310 form or e-mail, what you experience on the line.

***Thanks and have a good overnight!***

