

Hotel Update



*Jay Lyle (PIT)
Chairman, Crew Accommodations Committee*

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Iwould like to start this month off with some very good news: the grievance we filed over the Fort Lauderdale hotel change has been awarded in our favor. Our crews left the Howard Johnson’s on May 31. Our new hotel is now the former long overnight hotel, the Doubletree in Fort Lauderdale.

Many people were responsible for our success on this issue, and I thank all of them for their efforts, but I would like to single out a few key people in this article. First off is MEC Vice Chairman Craig Skinner, the grievance chairman who started this grievance process for us. After his election to vice chairman, Doug Mowery (PIT) stepped in and did a wonderful job. Two of our committee members, Bob Crowther (BOS) and Barry Massion (PHL) also deserve special recognition for their hard work and efforts on behalf of our pilot group. When you see any of these folks, please give them a big thanks.

All of these gentlemen, plus the ALPA legal staff, as well as every pilot who took the time to fill out a 310 form, helped a great deal in this effort. So thanks to all who participated.

Captain Gibson also deserves our gratitude for taking the time to make a trip to FLL and experience first-hand what we were talking about. It is relatively easy to make a ruling without taking all of the circumstances into consideration—but that was not the case this time. I appreciate the extra time that was taken to make a knowledgeable, fair decision on this case.

When you return to the Doubletree you will start to see some changes at the hotel as all the rooms are being refurbished. The renovation should be completed by the end of November. The Doubletree manager, who never wanted us to leave, is very happy to be getting us back!

Corporate Travel Services

Our management has changed the name and the function of our Crew Accommodations Department. The new name is Corporate Travel Services. In addition to dealing with crew accommodations, they will also be responsible for securing rooms for other employees traveling on company business. Department personnel have indicated that they will make an effort to place other employees at the same hotels that are designated for crews. I believe the goal is to try and get a better handle on travel costs for all employees on company business. I hope to be able to track how many rooms they are booking and how many times they use our crew hotels. Since it is felt that these rooms are good enough for crews, then they should also be sufficient for other employee groups traveling on company business.

Additional department hiring is planned to deal with the increased workload. This could be a great help to us. Often when committee members are available to travel for site inspections, our company counterparts are busy with office work to be able to get out on the road. Let’s hope that situation is remedied with the addition of more staff.

The Corporate Travel Services was officially up and running on April 15. It is now mandatory for all company employees traveling on business to call the desk to make reservations for a hotel or rental car. I will be monitoring this service to determine how successful they are in booking other employees in crew hotels.

AFA/management meeting

I attended a meeting with the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) and our management on May 13. The AFA is reporting a decrease in

the number of 310 forms being submitted. Ours has stayed fairly consistent, but I would like to see the numbers rise. I get many verbal complaints and hear many folks griping about past problems in hotels. If you would take the time to fill out a form, your committee would have a much better picture of what is happening at hotels that we don't have an opportunity to get to on a regular basis.

Training rooms

Your committee is also doing additional work on the training rooms we are using outside of the Pittsburgh and Charlotte training facilities. When you are in training and are sent to any location, please let us know how satisfied you were with the hotel in which you stayed. If you have already been through training like this and would still like to comment, please do so. We fully understand that pilots require a different type of hotel for a multi-day stay, but sometimes our management doesn't realize this. Comments from those pilots affected help us to shed some light on the subject. To make a comment about the hotels used for training, please use the OF-310 form or drop me a note via e-mail or co-mail. Right now we are conducting training in Seattle, Miami, Dallas, Phoenix, Long Beach, and Wilmington. There is also talk of using Salt Lake City in the near future.

Incidental charges

A recurring problem has come back again; this time in Richmond, VA. It seems that the hotel had to write off over \$1,600.00 in incidental charges that crewmembers staying at the hotel did not pay. To stop this from happening, the hotel is now requiring crewmembers to leave a \$20.00 deposit or a credit card imprint for the phone to be turned on, the movies on, and to have the ability to charge room service to your room. We all can help to prevent this situation from spreading by making sure our fellow crewmembers pay their incidental charges. I still need to do some more work on this problem in Richmond, but please be aware that it has happened here, and it could spread if we are not careful.

Relocations

Van times from hotels and relocations are also becoming a bigger problem in recent weeks. When being relocated from our normal hotels, Operations Crew Support should notify you of the move if they know about it. Our hotel contract stipulates two cities in which the hotel can

relocate our crews if necessary. These are PWM and SAV long. We accepted these conditions because we couldn't find a better hotel in those cities that would give us better service. In PWM, United would love to get into this Holiday Inn; but unless someone leaves that will not happen. In SAV, Delta left the Hilton because of the relocations, but their new hotel is not working out at all. The Delta pilots strongly encouraged me to try and keep the Hilton even if it meant accepting some relocation because of their experience. Now Delta wants to get back to the Hilton, but they won't take them back.

When you are relocated, I ask that you take a minute to let me know about it. Unfortunately, I am not currently notified about relocations by our management. But I'm going to ask if they could include me in the notification or at least generate a report monthly so that I can see who is relocating us to where, and why. When you inform me of any relocation, please include where you were sent and how you thought the hotel compared to our contracted hotel. Relocations are handled through Operations Crew Support—a different department than Travel Services—the department that actually scouts the cities for our overnight hotels.

Inspections and changes

We now have a new Marriott Courtyard for Chicago Midway overnights. This hotel is near the Hampton that we used when we last serviced MDW. In fact, the same company owns the cluster of hotels near the Marriott.

The Courtyard serves breakfast in the hotel's restaurant. They are also getting ready to open the restaurant up for lunch and dinner. Attached to the Courtyard is a TGI Fridays restaurant, which presently provides room service. The breakfast at the hotel is a cooked-to-order style buffet, which costs \$7.95. The hotel will be charging 50 cents for local phone calls. There will be no charge for 800 calls. You will find irons, ironing boards, coffee makers, data ports, and hair dryers in all the rooms. They are also going to be adding a second phone line to the room. A local workout facility, called Al's Gym, is also available, which caters to the body-builder type and charges \$5.00. The gym is located just around the corner from the hotel complex.

While in Chicago, we also looked for a new short hotel and found a few good options, but so far no decision has yet been made. We want to move from the current hotel due to noise from the renovation and the airport. We also spent

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some time reviewing the long overnight hotel and have compiled a list of other hotels in town that are expressing an interest in our business. I would prefer to stay where we are as the Ambassador Hotel has worked well. It is closer to O’Hare than the other hotels, but not by much, and there are more restaurants near our current hotel than the alternatives. Also, the lake and the park are much more accessible. This is one of the hotels that generates many more positive comments than negative.

The Ambassador is also going to improve the rooms by renovating the soft goods, but these improvements will not create any additional noise. Plus, they will be replacing at least half of the air-conditioning units. The hotel also has extended a discount of 20 percent to us in the restaurant and on room service.

Another change is in Detroit for our long overnights. The Hyatt we used was sold and changed to a Marriott, so they will be renovating due to the name change. To accomplish the renovation the hotel will close 800 rooms at a time. We were asked to leave. We will be using the St. Regis to start, while reviewing all other options. We’ve used the St. Regis in the past when the Hyatt had some problems and when were trying to avoid the noise from last year’s Stanley Cup finals in Detroit. We had few comments on this hotel last time and, with time

being short, we have secured it with a short-term contract as it is currently our best option.

We are also reviewing our options for hotels in several other cities. One is San Diego. No decision has been made yet, but we are leaning heavily toward renewing our present contract with the existing hotel. Options were reviewed in SRQ and BUF for short overnights, but again, no decisions have been made. We had a trip to RDU planned to review the long overnight there, but management canceled that trip. We hope to have it rescheduled soon.

Locations up for review include LAX and EWR (long), where I have made contact with a couple of hotels that might be interested in our business. We will also be reviewing our options in IAH, CAK, IND (short), MCI (long), CLE (short-Ramada), CHA, and MSP. I’m sure management will have some cities to add to this list where contracts are about to expire.

That’s it for these two months. Thanks to all of you who have taken the time to fill out an OF-310 form or drop us a note. To those of you who have just complained to each other, please take the time to let us know what you’re running into on the overnights. I hope to have something new for you regarding crew meals next month.

Have a good overnight!



Disapproval List

EWR Long — It is a long drive and isolated. We are investigating another hotel, which is not as far and has businesses around it.

Off the list are FLL long—due to the change and DAY long—due to no overnights, but when they return we will move to another hotel.

Watch List

TPA long — Location of hotel is in town and not much going on there.

PBI long — New to the list. Transportation Company is the problem. The hotel has a new general manager and since his arrival complaints have gone way down.

CLE short — Ramada. Rooms are very dirty and bathrooms are disgusting. This hotel is very high on our list for replacement.

MSP— New to the list. Transportation problems and a renovation at the hotel.

IND short— Quality Inn. We want to get all long overnights out of this hotel since our long hotel has more rooms for us.

The 310 count for the month was 83. The largest number received on one city was six, with both FLL long and PBI long getting six remarks. There were four on crew meals, two good comments, two general comments, and two on overflow hotels.