

June 12, 2010

To Whom It May Concern,

As a former Flight Attendant in the airline industry, I know that safety is always the main priority of operating an aircraft and providing a service to the flying public. There are many things that the entire crew is required to perform prior, during, and after every flight to maintain a safe environment on and around the aircraft. Safety/security inspections of the aircraft itself and equipment on the aircraft, passenger briefings and use of checklists are just a few of a flight attendant's responsibilities.

The height of the passenger cabin door and the average height of the flying public are causing an ongoing safety concern within the regional jet aircraft family. On several occasions, I can remember watching numerous passengers hit their heads on the top of the cabin door entryway either while boarding or de-boarding the aircraft. This is very painful, causes various types of injuries and bleeding as well as very embarrassing! Having kept in contact with friends who are still crewmembers in the airline industry, I constantly hear stories of this problem continuing to present itself. Therefore, I decided to take action and help be a part of the solution before it escalates into neglectful actions filed against any of the following; the regional airlines, aircraft insurers, airport authority and the FAA.

The aircraft cabin door is made out of hardened callous metal with sharp edges or corners and other various metal parts that lock and secure the door. These door locks protrude out from the door just enough to create even more of a hazard when hit with your head. Knowing the problem, there is a definite need for a solution to maintain the integrity and the priority of passenger safety and preventive safety.

It is common practice to board and de-board the aircraft without the use of the "jet bridge" in which case the aircraft stairs must be used. These steps are very steep and narrow. When a passenger hits their head on the top of the passenger door entryway while entering or exiting the aircraft they are in danger of being temporarily disoriented enough to cause them to lose their balance and fall; I have seen it several times. A fall down the steep aircraft stairs does cause yet another injury to themselves and possibly other passengers that are behind them or in front of them on the stairs.

With all of the negative attention regional airlines have been getting recently, this could soon be another potential contributor. Our society has become so "money hungry" and lawyers are looking for any reason to file a legal claim. I'm sure no Regional Airline wants to have to payout a liability lawsuit for something that I believe has a simple and practical resolve.

The cost of less than a penny per passenger compared to the risk of endangering passengers any longer and the cost of future legal actions should make it an immediate authorization to Federal Aviation Regulations and require its immediate use on all regional aircraft.

The FAA can very simply address this problem by utilizing a device that will conform to the overhead of the passenger entryway; I know it is already designed for each type of regional aircraft. It should also be made a requirement immediately for all regional passenger service aircraft operators to employ the head guard protection device and start to use it for the passenger safety purpose it is designed to do before you allow anyone else to be harmed.

When we all do our part, this world can be a little better and a much safer place. Let's not focus on what could be and focus on what must be!!!

If you have any questions regarding my belief in the endangerments of passengers and the risks we are facing please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dana Sutton  
Former Regional Airlines Flight Attendant