



ASSOCIATION OF FLIGHT ATTENDANTS - CWA, AFL-CIO
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Ladies and Gentlemen:

Recent announcements from the company regarding two items have created a number of questions and, in some cases, unnecessary controversy. The two items to which we refer are the establishment of the Bonus Bucks Program which incorporated distribution of the co-branded United Explorer Card as a mandatory part of our Inflight service and the revision to the Photography and Videography policy that appears in the Hemispheres Magazine onboard company aircraft. Both of these policies directly affect Flight Attendants.

Section 1.A.2. of our JCBA which recognizes the right of Flight Attendants in the employ of the company to do Flight Attendant work of the nature we have customarily and traditionally performed, also recognizes the Company's right to revise duties from time to time. Work onboard the aircraft is within our purview and while the Scope provisions of our Contract protect that work, as officers of our Union, it is our responsibility to fiercely defend that work and the scope language of our Contract.

Some of you may remember that we have done this work previously. As recently as 2009, we distributed other credit card applications for which we received compensation when applications were processed, approved and cards were used to make purchases. The Union at that time, entered into an Agreement with management to ensure we shared in the rewards resulting from the distribution of these cards and focused on protecting work on the aircraft.

In the ever changing, fiercely competitive airline industry in which we have all elected to build a career and pursue a profession as a service and safety professional, everything changes rapidly. As John Slater pointed out in a recent message to employees, "growing the population of United loyalists" is an essential component of the work we must do in order to secure the future of our airline. Our competitors, he suggests, are ahead of us in this area

To our credit, Inflight management recognizes not only the value we bring in the committed time we spend with our customers but also that, as Flight Attendants, we are the work group who spends the greatest amount of face time with our customer base. We are recognized for our work. We make a difference.

For these reasons, when management advised us of their intent to revise our duties on the aircraft making this a required duty and as the framework of the program was put together, we advocated for our share of the profits generated. Not only will we benefit through our Contractual Profit Sharing program, we will have the ability to directly benefit from our work when any application we distribute is approved and subsequently used by the customer to make purchases. We directly benefit from our work.

The recent revision to the Photography and Videography policy contained in the Hemispheres magazine onboard company aircraft was not a change that was taken lightly either by management or the Officers of the Union. While the decision to make a change to the policy was a management decision, it stemmed from our continuing advocacy that the language in the magazine lacked enforceability and it was misleading to employees. Management took the time to review the policy with the Officers and provided us with the opportunity to ask questions and to have our questions and concerns addressed.

INFLIGHT SAFETY PROFESSIONALS

We've heard from a number of you who have expressed your personal view that the airplane is a "private" place and that the company should restrict or stop customers from taking pictures or videos while on the airplane. Despite those opinions, the facts speak for themselves. That is, an airplane is a public mode of conveyance. As such, people onboard the aircraft – passengers and crew alike – should not have an expectation of privacy. Further, any attempt by the corporation to try to stop someone from taking a picture(s) of personal events on the aircraft would likely be met with resistance and potentially, a legal challenge. Of course, it is a reasonable expectation that anyone taking your picture should request your permission and, if not granted, should respect that decision.

However, without question, when the taking of pictures threatens the security of the flight, the safety of our passengers or interferes with the performance of our duties as crew members the circumstances change dramatically and in our favor as crew members. Under these circumstances, we can clearly state the reason why the pictures cannot be taken and have the ability to direct the person taking them to stop.

We have reviewed the proposed changes to company policy to determine if there might have been any legal avenues by which we could influence an alternative outcome. Regrettably, we've not found any provisions in the law by which either the company or the Union can compel a passenger not to take pictures of personal events on the aircraft. However, introducing the considerations contained within the new written policy essentially changes the circumstances in which we might normally find ourselves and to our benefit.

Understanding the change to this policy, what it means and how the policy is intended to be used is in our best interest. For this reason, we encourage you to review the CBT introducing this change so that you may obtain a full understanding of the policy revision which strengthens our influence and reinforces our role on the aircraft.

Most importantly, the policy change reinforces the need for all of us to use our CRM skills and to work together, in all things, in a cohesive manner, always supporting each other. Working together is our strong suite and is the time proven method of success in all that we do every day on every flight.

In Solidarity,
The Officers of the United Master Executive Council



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