

# CABIN CODE



From FCWs to BGCEs, cabin crew have a code to describe every kind of undesirable passenger, says *Guy Browning*

Cabin crew the world over receive intensive training on how to be nice to people who, in normal circumstances, they would avoid like the plague. Without doubt, the hardest part of their job is being pleasant and helpful to people who deserve a smart slap in the face and who should be carried in the hold, tightly bound with masking tape. Sadly, this is not an option for most airlines, and cabin crew have to keep smiling however badly provoked.

Naturally, cabin crew are as human as the rest of us and have developed a defence mechanism: their own language for describing the various types of passenger they come across day in and day out. The codes differ from airline to airline (and naturally none would officially admit to their existence), but the passengers they refer to are all instantly recognisable.

The first group is the FCWs – First Class Wannabees. These are people who will do or say anything for an upgrade – anything, that is, apart from pay for one. Similar to this is the BCGE – Blue Card Gold Ego – which refers to the frequent flier scheme of an airline. These are difficult and demanding people, who seem to think that because they're in the air they can demand a level of service and servility they would never expect on the ground.

The ground staff often alert the cabin staff to the impending arrival

on the aircraft of these people. They are then designated as CSCO – Can Spill Coffee On – or, if they're really difficult, DSCO – Definitely Spill Coffee On. So if you find yourself covered from head to foot in coffee by the end of a flight, you'll know why.

Amazingly, there are still people who think cabin crew are available for chatting up at any time. They are described as SOL – Sad Old Lechers – commonly abbreviated to Sierra Oscars. Alternatively, those who insist on having a conversation with touching are labelled BSIs – Body Space Invaders

The WAE – World Aviation Expert – knows every plane flying on every route in the world and who can and will give you detailed scheduling information and describe to you how the hydraulics

on the emergency door work. Another designation for these flying anoraks is SPS – Sad Plane Spotter.

Airborne nerdiness also extends to those people who have a burning desire to be shown the cockpit. Sometimes referred to as JJC – Junior Jet Clubbers – even if they are well into long trousers. The other code for them is FOCs or Friends of the Captain. They are the last people the captain wants to see in the cockpit, as he really doesn't need to answer the question 'What's that button for?' 50 times each flight.

Actually, FOCs are not quite the last people the captain would want to see in the cabin. PPPs – Possible Pin Pullers – are every cabin crew's nightmare. This means anyone who looks as though they might be about to attempt something dangerous and political.

In the news recently has been a spate of FBBs – Free Bar Bingers. These are people, usually on holiday, who decide to start the celebration at the end of the runway and are completely cabbaged by the time they reach cruising altitude. Really serious cases of FBBs become the much-feared DTN – Diversion To Newfoundland – where they will be taken off the aircraft and met by the local police.

The only passengers who don't have a code are the PPWKQASTs – Perfect Passengers Who Keep Quiet and Sit Tight – possibly because there aren't any. ☺

ILLUSTRATIONS: PETER LUBACH

