



Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO
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FLIGHT CREW HOSPITALIZED FOR POOR AIR QUALITY – AFA-CWA AGAIN CALLS FOR FURTHER STUDY OF ISSUE

Washington, DC – The Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA-CWA) issued the following statement regarding today’s US Airways incident in which five crew members were hospitalized for symptoms related to carbon monoxide poisoning after a flight from Washington, DC, to Boston.

“What happened today to our colleagues in Boston is truly unfortunate, not only because of the physical harm they sustained, but also because this could have been prevented,” said Patricia Friend, AFA-CWA International President.

“Poor cabin air quality has been an issue at the forefront of AFA-CWA for years and our efforts to make significant advances in the identification, treatment and ultimate removal of the problem has been thwarted by several U.S. carriers and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

“AFA-CWA has participated in an extensive study with the Occupational Health Research Consortium in Aviation (OHRCA) to identify the relationship between poor cabin air quality and the health of crew and passengers. However, what remains to be studied is exactly what in the air is toxic. Once those toxins have been identified, we can move forward with a solution and treatment of the problem. However, several U.S. carriers have refused to let their flight attendants participate in the simple data collection necessary to resolve this issue. Carriers have repeatedly denied flight attendants from carrying small, unobtrusive sampling devices onboard aircraft to capture air quality samples, and the FAA has turned a blind eye and refused to pass any mandates instructing carriers to allow participation.

“If the FAA and the airlines want to continue to ignore this hazardous situation, then Congress has the opportunity to intervene. Currently, the U.S. House of Representatives has passed a section in the upcoming FAA Reauthorization bill that allows for the collection, testing, and analyzation of cabin air samples. The Senate has yet to include any air quality provisions in their version of the bill, but AFA-CWA continues to work with our allies in the Senate to ensure that this vital issue is addressed.

“It is time that the health of millions of passengers and crew members is taken into consideration. It is time for the FAA and our carriers to step back and get out of the way of progress. We will never know the effect that potential toxins have until we are able to identify and study what they are.”

For over 60 years, the Association of Flight Attendants has been serving as the voice for flight attendants in the workplace, in the aviation industry, in the media and on Capitol Hill. More than 55,000 flight attendants at 20 airlines come together to form AFA-CWA, the world’s largest flight attendant union. AFA is part of the 700,000-member strong Communications Workers of America (CWA), AFL-CIO. Visit us at www.afanet.org.

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