



What Can You Do ? Tips and advice in the case of smell and fume events

The first recommendations address passengers:

They are "customers" and therefore more free to collect and pass on information. Crew members are airline employees and have instructions. Or are careful not to endanger their jobs. In an emergency, i.e. when a smell event or fume event occurs, they have no time as it is, since they have to take care of the passengers or do various other things following instructions from the cockpit.

If such an incident occurs you should:

1) take photos and videos: use your smartphone!

Note how 'smoky' the cabin is, or how easily panic spreads, or how the other passengers react: hold a piece of cloth in front of your nose, if the masks dropped, put it on (although this does not help at all, because the same air that is in the air conditioning flows through them).

If possible, make a video in which you can also capture the 'mood' acoustically.

If you are asked to refrain from doing so, or if they want to forbid it: use your smartphone anyway. You should not be forbidden to do so, since you did not sign a declaration before the flight, nor were you informed that you are forbidden to take pictures or the like on the plane. If they still try to stop you, at least record the sounds (without a picture).

In the media, especially on television, such incidents are usually only picked up if the journalists not only have an opinion or story from an individual, but if, for example, a video recording shows what happened and how everyone else reacted.

On television, this only works with pictures, because TV is a moving picture medium. If there are no pictures where one can see what happened, it can't be broadcast.

2) Information: Take notes of relevant data:

Time: when did it start, when did it end?

Was an announcement made ? Write down the most important explanations or instructions given by the crew (cockpit or cabin crew) immediately. (keywords)

Get the names and addresses of other passengers immediately so that you can contact them later. When passengers disembark, or if they (have to) go to the hospital or a doctor at the airport, it is usually impossible or difficult to collect addresses and testimonies. Especially when passengers are separated.

Later, create a summary: date, destination or place of landing, flight number, aircraft type (if possible aircraft registration). You may even remember the captain's or co-pilot's name, for example from when they introduced themselves after reaching cruising altitude.

Keep relevant evidence: boarding pass, other travel documents. Create a small protocol - using the keyword notes you made on the plane.

Also note if the crew was negatively affected and note your observations.

After disembaration:

3) Pass on the information!

a) Inform the airline and insist on a statement about what happened. Follow up until you have received a written explanation.

At the same time, inform:

(b) the relevant authorities, e.g.: the **Federal Bureau for Aircraft Accident Investigation - BFU: www.bfu-web.de** , the **German Federal Office of Civil Aviation - LBA: www.lba.de**.

In UK it would be the **CAA**, in USA the **FAA** and so on. A comprehensive list of authorities in various countries can be found here: **<https://www.aerotoxicteam.com/report-to-aviation-authorities.html>**

You can do this reporting online. It is also possible by phone, but then you have no proof that you reported it.

On the LBA website, it says under "Reporting" that one should use the BFU reporting form (see above). However, as we have shown, the LBA does not receive all the information from the BFU and we therefore propose that you inform this authority additionally (separately), regardless of whether you report it to the BFU. Use the email address provided „citizens information“: [buergerinfo\[at\]lba.de](mailto:buergerinfo[at]lba.de)

Also report to the EU-wide Aviation Safety Reporting Unit: **www.aviationreporting.eu**

This institution is part of EASA, the supreme EU supervisory authority. They will reflect reports back to the national reporting authorities (that is the way it works in Europe: always blame everything on others), but actually it keeps its own statistics (which are normally updated with data from the national authorities). Due to this the number of reported incidents is also the lowest.

But that's not so important. It is about showing the authorities that you know that something has happened and that you are one of those citizens who, as a taxpayer, is asking for something in return: by submitting a message that would otherwise - like so many others - go under.

c) Do not rely only on State authorities! Also report and give information to:

The **Aviation Herald: www.avherald.com** :

You can be sure that your message will be taken seriously by them. This is the platform collecting information about incidents and accidents worldwide. And most importantly: they publish them. On average, the Aviation Herald reports between 3 and 9 incidents per day.

Also inform us for our: **Aerotoxic Logbook www.ansTageslicht.de/ENATLB**

Send your email to: [redaktion\[at\]ansTageslicht.de](mailto:redaktion[at]ansTageslicht.de) , with the subject: "Aerotoxic".

In addition to the fact that you should report such an incident, there is another effect: the more affected people do this regularly, the more likely the authorities can be made a little bit more aware of this unresolved problem of contaminated cabin air, as well as the media and, above all, the politicians. In order that they - at some point - will take it seriously.

4) If you feel sick (already on the plane):

you should know that people can be divided into 3 groups as far as their sensitivity or genetic disposition to these substances is concerned: about 3% can get a serious health problem after such an incident. About 30% fall ill temporarily or for a little longer, but get well again. The rest, if it doesn't happen too often, can shrug it off as they say. At least according to current scientific and medical knowledge. But that can change.

These are typical symptoms:

Abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, urination issues, muscle weakness, flu-like symptoms, impaired balance and gait, tingling, numbness, irritation of the mucous membranes, visual difficulties, respiratory difficulties (not getting enough oxygen), cardiovascular problems and severe headaches.

Long-term effects of toxicity may be: fatigue, lung (respiratory) problems, memory impairment, concentration and speech disorders, complaints of the peripheral nervous system and more.

Recommendations:

Insist, already during the flight, that a doctor be at your destination who can examine you immediately and document everything.

Remember: The symptoms sometimes come with a time delay of up to 7 days. Have everything documented by a specialist and explain to him that the connection may be with a possible intoxication with neurological /central nervous system damaging oil components as cause.

This is also important so that the physician can select the appropriate diagnosis key from the ICD-10 classification list (International Classification of Diseases) and note it on a „notification of illness.“ This is of great importance for any subsequent claims for damages against the airlines.

In a suspected case, for example, „T65“ (> toxic effect of other and unspecified substances) would be appropriate. Keep a symptoms diary.

If there is no doctor at the airport: go directly to a hospital where they are able to carry out the following test and examinations. Or (better, because very few hospitals are prepared for such things): be hospitalized in the first available hospital.

a) EDTA - blood and

b) urine collection

c) freeze everything (3 stars freezer)!

Suitable tubes and cups that can firmly be closed are available. Purpose: in order that you can then hand it in somewhere else (e.g. when you are back home etc.), where you can get it worked on seriously, and get it examined. The problem is: it only makes sense if blood and urine are collected within a few hours, as the half-life of the substances in question is only a few hours. So: the sooner the better!

Keep 2-3 urine samples and freeze them. Label them with the exact date and time. This enables toxicological monitoring because the substances metabolize in the body. This means that the inhaled substances are converted into others, some of which cannot be tested and which are harmful to health.

Hospitals in Germany: We are currently questioning all hospitals in the vicinity of airports whether and to what extent they are prepared for the necessary examinations in connection with aerotoxic syndrome. The results are not yet available. Of course we will publish this list here.

One of those hospitals that are medically prepared for such cases and also have free capacities available is the "Hospital zum Heiligen Geist" in 60311 Frankfurt, Lange Strasse. Phone: 069 - 21 96 - 0

And here is an address which is seriously concerned with this health problem and which is also medically and infrastructurally prepared for it: the only one in Europe (update June 2018: which in the mean time has been closed)

Fume Event Consultation Hour

at the German University Hospital Göttingen (UMG).

Address:

Institute for Occupational, Social and Environmental Medicine

Waldweg 37 in D - 37073 Göttingen.

The expert, who at the same time researches, teaches and treats patients there, is senior physician Dr. Astrid HEUTELBECK. They also publish findings regularly in scientific journals (see the chapter on health, science and economic interests).

5) These are the tests you should have done as quickly as possible:

Note: when taking (EDTA) blood samples, make sure that the skin area is not disinfected with solvent-containing disinfectants but instead, for example, with a three-percent aqueous hydrogen peroxide solution. If there is no such thing available: write down the name of the disinfectant.

These values are important in human biomonitoring:

- CO-Hb, Met-Hb and O2 saturation
- Small blood count
- ALAT, ASAT (GPT, GOT)
- AChE determination
- Complete blood gas analysis incl. measurement of lactates
- Urine test
- Differential blood count
- Kidney values
- Liver values

The following physical examinations should be carried out (directly after the Fume Event and later on again):

- Neurological examination
- Testing of (at least): BSR, TSR, PSR and ASR
- Testing of peripheral motor function and sensitivity
- incl. bulbo- and pupillomotor oriented neurological examination

Group FLIGHT ATTENDANTS and Cockpit-CREW

In principle the same applies for the professionals as what is recommended for passengers. In addition we publish here:

- **a checklist issued by the trade union ver.di.** It is also about what to do if flight doctors and so-called D-doctors (transit doctors) refuse to refer someone (i.e. to Göttingen).
- **a guide from the Cockpit Association**

We hope, however, that you will be spared such incidents, which would be the better situation.

What can you do about it in general?

There are always (at least) 2 possibilities:

- One grumbles, mumbles and complains - amongst friends and acquaintances.
- You do something about it. Which means more than grumbling.

In the first case, the probability that something will change is zero. In the second case, the chances are far greater. You must know this.

The problem with fume events, which can lead to the effects of aerotoxic syndrome is, that these things are – officially – denied. Although airlines have long been unable to deny that such incidents occur, they still deny the link between such fume events and the health effects (see **Health, Science and Economic Interests**).

This will not change as long as politicians do not react to it. Because they are responsible and have the legislative instruments for it. In addition, all ministers, including the chancellor, must swear at the start of their term of office "to avert damage to the people". This also applies to foreseeable health damage caused by fume events.

Recommendation: draw the attention of your representatives to the problem: the members of your constituency (Germany: in the Landtag and in the Bundestag). Please also refer to the „Aerotoxic Logbook“, which we have been keeping since the beginning of 2017: where we list such incidents to document how often fume events happen: **www.ansTageslicht.de/ATLB**. Let us know how your parliamentary "representatives" react - we will document whether and how seriously your "representatives" take what you say to them.

If your representatives are in the (i.e. Germany CDU), you might ask why this party is constantly playing down the problem (see chapter **Politics and the Aerotoxic Syndrome NOT ONLINE !**). If he is a representative of the (i.e. Germany SPD), he could explain why the SPD in the opposition has advocated active action, but now in the „GroKo“ does not want to know anything more about it. Representatives of the LEFT and GREENS Party have the problem on their screens. If they had their way, things would have changed a long time ago.

It will probably be as it has happened in the USA, even if it sounds cataclysmic. There, the government administration intervened with improvement measures, especially when yet again another airplane with congressmen or senators on board crashed (see **Aviation Reporting Systems**). But it doesn't have to come to that. Become active before it does!

(JL)

By the way: You can also access this page directly: www.ansTageslicht.de/WCYD (What Can You Do). And here you can download the complete text "WCYD as a pdf" - e.g. to save it on your smartphone. In case of an event that we would like to spare you from experiencing.