

## 5. Column

### Personal experiences of pilots involving close call incidents (contributors)

I would like to write about close call incidents that I have experienced.

Pilots conduct an external check of aircraft before flights. When conducting an external check on large aircrafts, you tend to walk while looking upwards often. As you may know, there are many vehicles in parking areas around aircraft, and they move about busily to do their own work.

In addition, there are also freight containers laying around. Because you have to conduct external checks within such an environment, I always tried to remain vigilant while conducting external checks. Nevertheless, I nearly collided with vehicles on many occasions. Because I did not wear a fluorescent vest at that time, working at night was particularly dangerous.

While it was not caused by my experiences, subsequently it became obligatory to wear fluorescent vests at the time of external inspections.

The operation of aircraft is supported by communication by wireless telephones with air traffic control organizations. Large aircraft are normally equipped with three radios, one of which is used for communication with the control organization. Individual radios can be set with two differing frequencies. They can be switched by selecting the switch and used for communications with the control organization. It was ordinary for the frequency set not used to be preset with the frequency believed to be used for communication with the next control organization. One time, as a frequency was preset, for some reason I simultaneously operated the selection switch. I felt that the feeling in my hands was somehow different. As I felt that something was strange after listening to the communication, noticed that the frequency had changed despite there being no instructions to change the frequency when I confirmed the frequency. While no problems occurred as I immediately changed in back to the original frequency, it was a chilling experience. After telling one of my seniors about this, I remember being told "Rather than slick operations that seem clever at first, you should try to conduct steady operations even if they seem unsophisticated."

Clouds can be a bother when operating a flight. If you enter a cumulonimbus cloud that develops, some passengers may become injured, and the aircraft may become damaged. Aircraft are equipped with airborne radar in order to detect these clouds early and avoid them. In an aircraft I crewed, the rotary switch to change the reflection intensity of this radar was located on the radar operations panel. Usually we fly with this set in the auto position (position with the switch turned fully to the left where it is snapped into position). The switch falling out of this position results in a position where the minimum reflection intensity can be gained, and the reflection intensity increases as the switch is turned to the right, ultimately enabling maximum reflection intensity. The radar display is displayed as red, yellow, and green, in descending order of intensity. When flying in a location where there are some cumulonimbus clouds, the radar display can become covered in red. During these times, pilots change the reflection intensity to scrutinize the cloud conditions and find a location that will have less of an impact on the flight. In one case I moved the switch that changes intensity with the intention of returning it to the auto position, but without fully returning it back. That position is the position where reflection intensity is its weakest. The front looked like lighting when I conducted external monitoring. When I checked the radar display, no clouds like that were displayed. When operating the switch for adjusting the reflection intensity on the radar operation panel, I noticed that it had not been returned to the auto position. When moved back to the auto position, the display properly appeared red. While I normally announce when operating this switch so that other pilots have a common awareness, I remember that I did not do that at that time.

Although I have written about my own experiences, they were all things that I had known about by hearing about experiences and media issued by the company. I think that it was this information that made it possible for me to notice the mistakes I had made at an early stage.

I hope that it is possible to further foster a culture that makes it possible to talk or report freely and frankly when close call incidents are encountered, and for the people involved to share and utilize information.