



Even safer and more enjoyable air travel for all

A strategy for reducing unruly and disruptive passenger incidents



Contents

1. Executive summary	3
2. Introduction	4
2.1. How significant is the issue?	4
2.2. Levels of severity of unruly and disruptive behaviour	6
3. A two-step approach to reducing unruly and disruptive passenger incidents	8
3.1. Stronger and more effective deterrent	8
3.2. Communicating the types of prohibited conduct onboard flights	8
3.3. Jurisdiction.....	10
3.4. Enforcement	12
3.5. The role of government registers of unruly and disruptive passengers	13
4. Preventing and managing incidents	14
4.1. Training and guidance	14
4.2. Multi-stakeholder initiatives	14
4.3. Awareness campaigns	14
5. Resources and further reading	16

1. Executive summary

International air travel is by far the safest form of transport with over 4 billion passengers traveling safely each year (pre-pandemic). This remarkable safety record is a result of the collective efforts and partnership between governments, manufacturers, airlines, and many other industry stakeholders. The overwhelming majority of customers simply want to get to their destination safely, conveniently and without disturbance. However, the unruly and disruptive behavior of a small minority of passengers has a disproportionate adverse impact on other passengers and cabin crew, whose primary job is to ensure the safety, security, and comfort of all onboard.

In 2014, Member States of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) recognized the growing frequency and severity of such incidents and agreed significant changes to international air law, adopting the *Protocol to Amend the Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft* (known as the Montréal Protocol 2014 or MP14). They also developed significant new guidance for States in the form of Manual Doc. 10117 which also provides more information and even model legislation relating to civil and administrative penalties as a means of enhancing enforcement to ensure there are sanctions appropriate to all types of unruly and disruptive offenses and acts.

More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic brought the issue of unruly and disruptive behavior to the attention of governments and regulators vividly because of non-compliance with face mask mandates. Thankfully, as the public health situation has improved, most of these mask mandates have now been removed, through many governments, regulators, and law enforcement authorities have started to review and implement new, more robust ways to deter unruly and disruptive passenger incidents.

The strategy and examples of good practice set out in this document highlights four key areas where governments can help make flying even safer by strengthening the deterrent against unruly and disruptive behavior, namely:

- Implement Standard 6.45 of [Annex 9 Facilitation](#) to raise traveller awareness by communicating what is unacceptable conduct onboard aircraft and what legal and other sanctions are in place.
- Ensure that any remaining jurisdictional gaps are removed that prevent law enforcement and prosecutors dealing with unruly passenger upon landing in their territory by ratifying the Montreal Protocol 2014.
- Undertake a thorough review of enforcement mechanisms in place for unruly and disruptive behavior and ensure a range of different measures are available based on the nature of the offense or act committed – with an emphasis on civil and administrative sanctions to supplement criminal prosecutions, where appropriate.
- Support industry stakeholders as they work on prevention and management initiatives.

ICAO has developed all the tools necessary to support governments on this issue. If implemented, IATA considers that the measures above, together with industry initiatives, will contribute to an overall reduction in unruly and disruptive passenger incidents. This will help to create an even safer and more enjoyable air travel experience for all. IATA stands ready to work with governments and support them in this important work.

2. Introduction

The terms “unruly passengers”, “disruptive passengers” and “unruly and disruptive passengers” are commonly understood to refer to passengers who fail to respect the rules of conduct on board aircraft or to follow the instructions of crew members and thereby create a threat to flight safety and/or disturb the good order and discipline on board aircraft.

It seems that hardly a week goes by without the media reporting on a high-profile unruly and disruptive passenger incident onboard a flight. While it's true that only a tiny minority of the 4.3 billion passengers that travel by air each year (pre-COVID19 pandemic) become unruly, they have a disproportionate impact. Such incidents may:

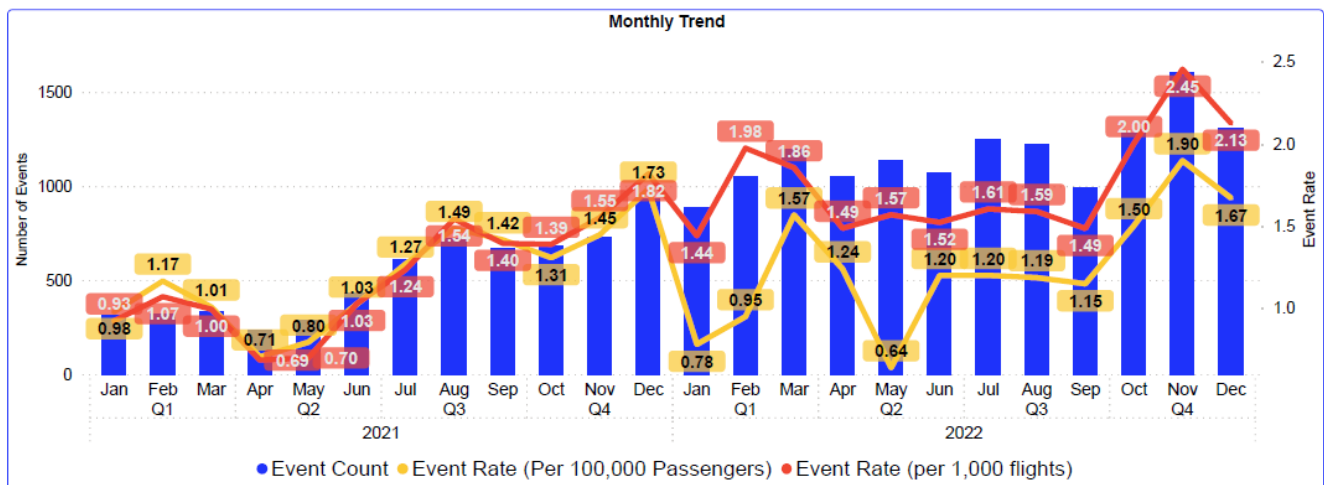
- threaten the safety and security of the aircraft, other passengers, and crew
- cause physical, mental, and emotional harm to other passengers and crew;
- result in inconvenience to other passengers due to operational disruption (e.g., delays and diversions).

2.1. How significant is the issue?

Statistics from both industry and regulators such as the UK Civil Aviation Authority, the [US Federal Aviation Administration \(FAA\)](#) (as shown overleaf)) and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) point to a long-term trend of increasing frequency and severity of unruly passenger incidents. [From this material](#), it seems clear that this will continue to be an issue that needs to be addressed.

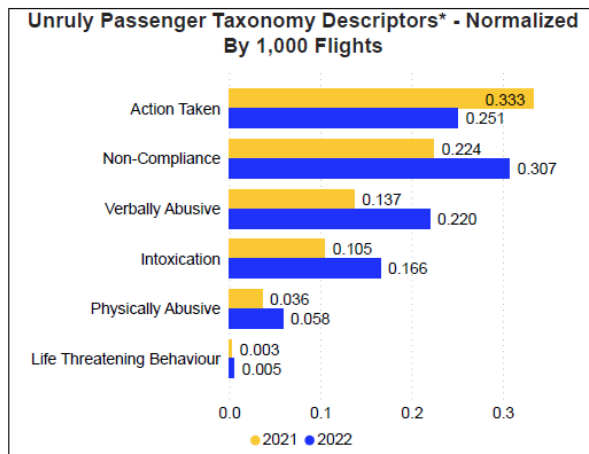
IATA IDX - Unruly Passenger Incident Reports – January 2021 to December 2022

Incident rate 2021: 1 incident per 835 flights. Incident rate 2022: 1 incident per 568 flights.



IATA itself has been collecting and analyzing safety reports from member airlines including incidents relating to unruly and disruptive passengers since 2007. The IDX dataset is the only global dataset of unruly passenger incidents that is available. The most recent report from January 2021 to December 2022 has been developed using aggregated and de-identified data from IATA's IDX program. A total of 20,301 reports were extracted in the period.

The IATA data incident rate per 1,000 flights for the calendar year was 1.2 or 1 incident for every 835 flights. This increased to 1.76 or 1 incident for every 568 flights in 2022. Non-compliance with crew instruction was the most frequent descriptor (0.224 per 1,000 flights in 2021 rising to 0.307 in 2022) as shown below. The number of reports mentioning verbal and physically abusive behaviors also increased in 2022.



Equivalent rate (1 incident per x number of flights)

Descriptor	2021	2022
Action taken	3,003	3,984
Non-compliance	4,464	3,257
Verbally abusive	7,299	4,545
Intoxication	9,524	6,024
Physically abusive	27,778	17,241
Life threatening	333,333	200,000

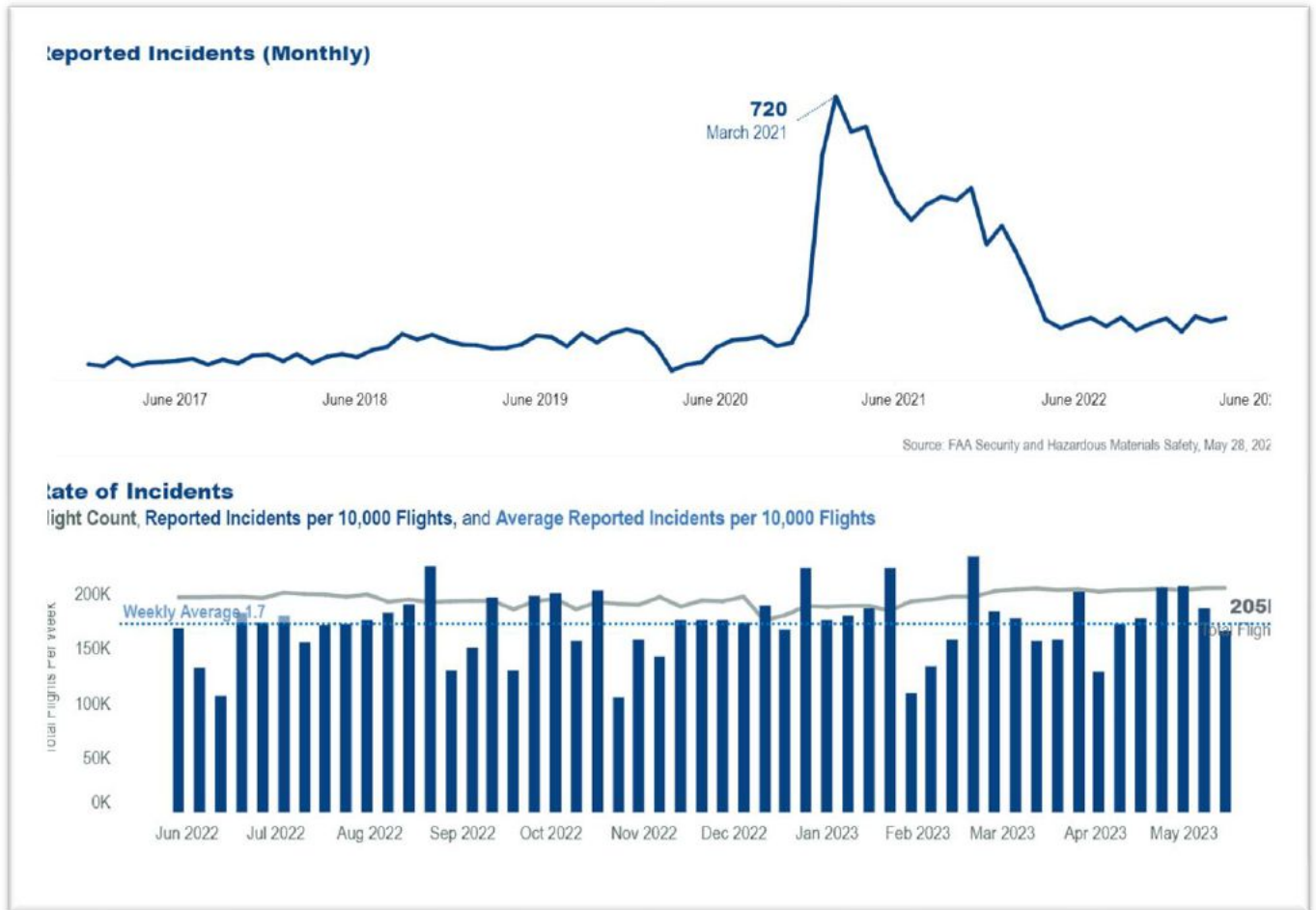
The "action taken" classification means that the reporting airline classified their report with details of any action taken. These actions may sometimes be further classified in the next level into "Warning given", "police called", "passenger restrained", etc. Many the reports only detail the passenger behavior, without adding the actions taken. A single report may fall into multiple classification categories.

When analyzing non-compliance in more detail following descriptors were noted in order of frequency of occurrence:

- Smoking of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapes and puff devices in the cabin or lavatories lavatory
- Fasten seat belts
- Cabin baggage (Exceeding the carry-on baggage allowance or failing to store it when required).
- Consuming own alcohol

Non-compliance with crew instructions that are mandated by national law or regulations can have safety implications – for example, smoking in the lavatory is a dangerous fire hazard while consuming alcohol that is not served onboard and becoming intoxicated, can also have implications for the timely evacuation of the aircraft in an emergency. That said, it is important to note that many of these incidents may have been de-escalated to a satisfactory conclusion by the crew using their training but were still reported

US FAA – Reported unruly passenger incidents



2.2. Levels of severity of unruly and disruptive behaviour

Level 1 Minor	Level 2 Moderate	Level 3 Serious	Level 4 Flight deck breach
<p>Intentionally non-compliant with safety regulations and policies.</p> <p>Boisterous/lively/excitable, particularly when traveling as part of a group.</p> <p>Argumentative.</p>	<p>Physically aggressive.</p> <p>Obscene or lewd physical contact.</p> <p>Causing damage to aircraft fixtures or equipment.</p>	<p>Dangerous.</p> <p>Display of, or use of, weapon.</p> <p>Intent or threat to injure.</p>	<p>Attempt to hijack.</p> <p>Sabotage.</p> <p>Credible threat of death.</p>

Source: IATA Cabin Operations Safety Best Practice Manual, Edition 7 (2022)

Most reported unruly passenger incidents are classified as Level 1 – which usually are verbal in nature and can generally be characterized as anti-social behavior. This would include being non-compliant with face coverings (where required) or failure to wear a seatbelt. Most of these cases can be brought to a satisfactory conclusion by cabin crew using de-escalation techniques and training. That is not to trivialise these incidents, because there is always a danger of incidents escalating, they divert crew attention, and they do impact good order and discipline onboard.

Similarly, where someone is intoxicated, but is not being unruly or disruptive, this is also likely to also be classified as a Level 1 incident. It is important to note that any passenger on board a flight that is intoxicated either through alcohol, narcotics or medication is a safety risk, both to themselves and everyone else on the aircraft. An intoxicated passenger that is not able to follow safety instructions or is incapable of exiting the aircraft in an emergency evacuation is a safety risk.

Level 2 and Level 3 incidents are physical in nature and can be very dangerous either to crew or to other passengers. In the case where an unruly passenger assaults a member of the cabin crew, the injury sustained may mean they are unable to perform their primary duties. There is also the safety risk posed when unruly passengers damage or tamper with essential safety equipment on the aircraft.

Summary:

- While still rare, unruly and disruptive passenger incidents are of significant concern to both governments and airlines as incidents have the potential to impact safety of passengers, crew, and the aircraft
- There has been a long-term trend of increasing frequency and severity of unruly passenger incidents
- While non-compliance with crew instruction has been an issue for many years, failure to wear a face mask during the COVID-19 health emergency has raised government awareness of the problem.

3. A two-step approach to reducing unruly and disruptive passenger incidents

3.1. Stronger and more effective deterrent

It is clearly preferable to avoid unruly and disruptive incidents occurring in the first place than to try and manage them during the flight. How ground and cabin crew react to situations is crucial and de-escalation and other training techniques aimed at preventing and managing incidents will be covered in Section 4. However, IATA strongly believes deterrence has a key role in preventing such incidents. Airlines want their customers to have a safe and enjoyable journey, but actions that affect the safety and comfort of other passengers and crew cannot be tolerated and those who become unruly and disruptive need to know there are serious consequences to their actions. This sends a very powerful message to those who may feel that rules and regulations do not apply to them.

That being the case, several aspects relevant to deterrence should be reviewed, namely:

- Are travelers aware of what constitutes unruly and disruptive behavior onboard and what legal and other sanctions may result?
- Do governments have the necessary legal powers needed to deal with unruly passenger incidents on foreign registered aircraft that land in their territory?
- Do governments have the enforcement tools in place to respond to the different types and severities of incidents that may occur? Are these sufficient to ensure that a person is held to the consequences of their behavior?

3.2. Communicating the types of prohibited conduct onboard flights

An aircraft cabin is a unique environment. Behaviors which some people may deem to be acceptable on the ground take on a completely different complexion in the confines of an aircraft traveling at 500 miles per hour six miles above the ground. For example, while smoking in a building lavatory may be illegal and a public health nuisance, smoking in a lavatory during a flight is not only illegal, but also could have serious or even fatal consequences should a fire break out onboard. This speaks to the need for increased awareness of the types of prohibited conduct onboard aircraft and the personal consequences of being unruly and disruptive.

One of those fundamental safety responsibilities is that lawful instructions given by the crew are followed without exception, and that interactions between fellow passengers and crew are respectful. **That's why various international treaties such as the Tokyo Convention 1963 refer to the need to maintain "good order and discipline" onboard.** Governments and aviation regulators are strong advocates of consumer protection. They also need to be equally strong advocates for consumer responsibility regarding safety and security.

"Governments and aviation regulators are strong advocates of consumer protection. They also need to be equally strong advocates for consumer responsibility regarding safety and security."

It is essential that all passengers, especially those who are flying for the first time, understand clearly what constitutes prohibited behaviours onboard and what legal or other actions may result for failure to comply. States have recognized the importance of ensuring that travelers understand their responsibilities and the consequences of misbehaviour. Standard 6.45 of Annex 9 - *Facilitation* of the Chicago Convention states that:

"Each Contracting State shall, to deter and prevent unruly behaviour, promote passenger awareness of the unacceptability and possible legal consequences of unruly or disruptive behaviour in aviation facilities and onboard aircraft."

Communication should be through media, social media and on physical sites within the airport environment (for example on flight information display screens or on check-in desks). In the past, for example, Transport Canada developed a range of physical posters that could be deployed. Of course, airlines, airports and other stakeholders can refer to or promote these communications to further raise awareness.

However, if people are made aware of prohibited conduct onboard and possible sanctions, it is important that appropriate enforcement action is taken against those who fail to comply, as this will deter future incidents. If there is no law enforcement response to such behaviour this undermines these messages.

Good practice example: United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) campaign

The US FAA has seen an increase in incidents where airline passengers have disrupted flights with threatening or violent behavior during the pandemic during 2020 and 2021. Many of these incidents related to the mandate under US law to wear a face mask onboard.

In January 2021, the FAA Administrator signed an order implementing a stricter legal enforcement policy against unruly airline passengers. This followed several incidents of physical assault relating to compliance with face mask mandate.

While the FAA previously responded to unruly-passenger incidents using warnings, counseling, and civil penalties, it introduced a new 'zero tolerance' policy to address the surge in cases. Under this policy, the FAA will pursue legal enforcement action against any passenger who assaults, threatens, intimidates, or interferes with airline crew members.

In addition to promoting safe and responsible passenger behavior, as well as awareness to its policy of 'zero tolerance', the FAA developed a toolkit of awareness-raising materials including:

- airport digital signage for display on airport monitors;
- news and press releases;
- public service announcement videos (which could be used on airline and airport websites, inflight entertainment systems, etc.);
- social media messaging.

The campaign, which is backed by robust enforcement action has led to a 60% reduction in reported cases from the peak in 2021. Over \$7million in fines has been proposed by the FAA since the start of the campaign.

More information about this innovative awareness-raising material, which is consistent with fulfilling the obligations of the standard in Annex 9 – *Facilitation* can be found [here](#).

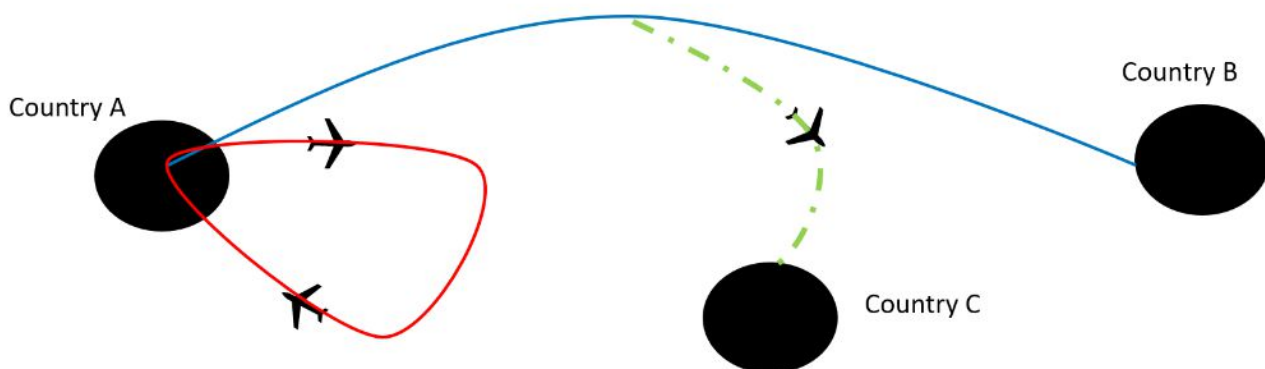


“Assault a member of staff in a shop or a restaurant and the likelihood is you will be arrested and face prosecution. Do it on an international flight and there is a high probability that you won’t be penalised for it.”

3.3. Jurisdiction

Assault a member of staff in a shop or a restaurant and the likelihood is you will be arrested and face prosecution. Do it on an international flight and there is a high probability that you won’t be penalised for it. This is because under existing international law (the Tokyo Convention 1963), authorities in the State in which the aircraft is registered have jurisdiction over offenses committed onboard, and due to practical enforcement aspects, as well as the discretion of enforcement authorities as to the type of case and the appropriate use of their resources. This means, for example, that if an unruly passenger assaults a crew member on a British (G-) registered aircraft traveling to Thailand and is subsequently delivered to the local authorities upon landing in Bangkok, law enforcement and prosecutors are often powerless to act. UK police (in the state of registration) are 9,500km and several time zones away, so in such cases unruly passengers are simply released, without facing any punishment for their misbehaviour. Indeed, in a survey of IATA member airline legal departments, over 60% of respondents highlighted that these jurisdictional issues were the main reason for lack of prosecutions globally.

Jurisdictional gaps associated with the Tokyo Convention 1963



The aircraft is registered in and the airline is based in Country A. The flight departs but there is an unruly passenger incident en-route to country B (scheduled destination).

Scenario 1 – Captain elects to return to Country A – The aircraft is registered in Country A. Police and prosecutors can deal with the passenger under national law. No problems!

Scenario 2 – Captain elects to continue to Country B (scheduled destination) – but authorities in Country A as State of aircraft registration have jurisdiction under the Tokyo Convention 1963. But they are 5,000km away. What can the police at the airport in Country B do? Usually, they release the passenger without charge.

Scenario 3 – Captain elects to divert to an airport in Country C, but again Country A has jurisdiction and the same problem occurs as in Scenario 2

Scenario 4 – The aircraft is dry-leased from a lessor and is registered in Country D. In this case, authorities in Country A (where the aircraft operates most flights to/from), Country B or Country C do not have jurisdiction. 50% of the world’s fleet is leased so these jurisdictional gaps may increase.

A further issue occurs where the aircraft is dry leased (i.e., without crew) to an operator that does not routinely fly to the state of aircraft registration as shown in Scenario 4 above. With more than 50% of the global fleet leased, without widespread ratification of MP14, the problem of jurisdiction when dealing with unruly passengers may get worse.

What is the Montreal Protocol 2014 and what does it do?

In 2014, ICAO Member States recognized the need to close jurisdictional gaps in international air law and agreed the Montreal Protocol 2014 or MP14. It is beyond the scope of this high level document to explain in detail the legal benefits that MP14 provides, though more information can be found in the [ICAO Administrative Package \(Doc. 10034\)](#). However, in simple terms, MP14 extends the jurisdictional provisions of the Tokyo Convention 1963 such that the state of scheduled landing has the necessary jurisdiction and may deal with unruly passengers under their own laws, irrespective of where the aircraft is registered. In addition, the state of operator also has option the capability to exercise jurisdiction. This closes the so-called jurisdictional gaps that are shown above and gives governments the ability to prosecute and take enforcement action against unruly passengers where appropriate.

Key benefits

- Jurisdiction extended to State of landing or State of the operator to initiate criminal, administrative or other form of legal proceedings – closes the jurisdictional gap.
- Protection of crewmembers and passengers of national carriers
- Keeps flying safe:
 - safety of aircraft, persons & property on board
 - maintains good order and discipline on board

Status

As with all international treaties, it takes time for domestic legislation to be amended to reflect treaty obligations. However, MP14 came into force on 1 January 2020 and as at 21 November 2022, [45 States](#) have now ratified it, with nine states becoming parties this year alone. This included Kenya, Peru, Rwanda, and Romania. IATA estimates that more than 33% of international traffic is now covered by states that are parties to MP14 and is supporting ICAO in urging more States to ratify MP14 in line with [Assembly Resolution A41-4 Appendix C](#). IATA has an ongoing advocacy engagement campaign with governments promoting the benefits of MP14 that is led by IATA's local office teams in coordination with regional partner associations.

Good practice example: France

Long before the revision of the Tokyo Convention 1963 was considered, France along with several other countries (Including Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US) extended their jurisdictional provisions to include the state of landing under national law. This means that France could take jurisdiction over unruly passenger incidents upon landing in French territory, irrespective of the state where the aircraft is registered. So, if France had already got state of landing jurisdiction provisions under national law, why did it subsequently ratify MP14 on 1 May 2021?

The answer is that the French Government recognized the are two ends of a route. While it had the means to deal with any unruly passenger incidents upon landing in its territory, this would not help French airlines when they must deal with incidents in foreign countries. Therefore, to support international uniformity and certainty, France became a party to MP14 in 2021. This demonstrates strong leadership as a leading aviation state and ICAO Council member and ratification of MP14 shows French support for multilateral air law instruments agreed under the auspices of ICAO. This should encourage other states to ratify MP14.

Summary – Governments are urged to:

- Undertake a review of the existing jurisdictional provisions in their national laws/regulations relating to unruly and disruptive passengers, using ICAO Documents 10117 and 10034 as guidance
- Assess the necessary domestic legislative or other steps required to accede/approve or ratify MP14 and start the process needed to become a party to MP14
- Deposit the instrument of ratification/accession/approval (a model instrument is provided in Doc 10034).

3.4. Enforcement

Improving uniformity and certainty are critical first steps to enhance an international policy of deterrence. However, just because a government has jurisdiction does not mean that an unruly passenger will be arrested, charged, and prosecuted. Often, prosecutors will assess the perceived severity of an unruly passenger incident and determine that bringing criminal proceedings will not be in the public interest or an appropriate use of limited resources. This may be for reasons of availability of court time, cost and/or evidentiary requirements. The lack of any government response in such cases undermines deterrence, allowing unruly passengers to act with perceived impunity. This also discourages airlines and crew from reporting incidents and committing their time to support these processes.

It is preferable for governments to have a wide range of enforcement measures that can be applied to different types of unruly and disruptive passenger incidents. IATA particularly supports the use of civil and administrative penalties where appropriate. For example, imagine if police have the power to issue **administrative infringement notices "on the spot", upon landing, in the same way as for a motoring speeding offense**. The deterrence element is reintroduced if a person receives a fine for his or her conduct (specific deterrence), close in time to the incident, and these fines can be generally publicized (general deterrence) by governments, airports, and airlines.

An ICAO task force was formed in the aftermath of the Diplomatic Conference that agreed MP14 tasked with updating and preparing additional guidance material and examples in respect of such systems for the reference of the international community. A regulatory manual is now available for States known as [ICAO Manual Document 10117 – Manual on the Legal Aspects of Unruly and Disruptive Passengers](#). These civil and administrative penalty systems are known to save considerable time for police authorities and the courts. When an infringement notice is issued, the person receiving the notice can either pay the fine or contest it if they wish. While not appropriate for all cases, IATA considers such a system as one tool for police to have at their disposal for example for basic cases of non-compliance. Criminal proceedings will always be relevant for the more severe incidents.

Good practice example: New Zealand

New Zealand introduced a new system to deal with unruly passenger offences in 2004 by making amendments to the Civil Aviation Act 1990. Section 65P sets out two options for when authorities believe that an unruly passenger offence has been committed on an international flight. The authorities may (a) charge the person under ordinary criminal procedure or (b) issue an infringement notice to the person. The infringement notice, like a speeding fine, will indicate details of the alleged offense and the infringement fee payable (which currently ranges from 500 to 1,000 New Zealand dollars). It may either be given to the defendant on the spot, on arrival, or posted to his or her address. A defendant may resolve the matter by simply paying the infringement fee within 28 days, which can be done at an international airport, or by requesting a court hearing.

Good practice example: France

On 1 June 2022, [France announced](#) a system of graduated administrative sanctions that can be used by the competent administrative authority against a disruptive passenger who, during a flight operated as public air transport by a French company, hinders flight personnel or refuses to comply with a safety instruction given by the flight personnel.

Two categories of sanctions are provided for:

- An administrative fine of a maximum of 10,000 euros (likely to be doubled in the event of a repeat offence) and a ban on boarding, for a maximum period of two years, on board aircraft operated by a French company.
- Up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of 75,000 euros

At the 41st ICAO Assembly, States agreed [Resolution A41-4](#) Appendix E which provides model legislation on offenses committed onboard aircraft and *“Encourages States which have not yet done so to consider introducing civil and administrative sanctions to deal with less serious acts or offences relating to unruly and disruptive behaviour on board aircraft in an expeditious and effective manner.”*

Summary – Governments are urged to:

- Review their existing enforcement measures available to deal with the different types of unruly and disruptive passenger incidents, using *ICAO Manual Doc. 10117* as a guide.
- Where gaps are identified, particularly where dealing with less severe types of incidents, new enforcement mechanisms including civil and administrative penalties should be considered to enhance the deterrent in line with ICAO Resolution A41-4 Appendix E.

3.5. The role of government registers of unruly and disruptive passengers

Individual airlines may refuse carriage to persons who present a safety risk in accordance with conditions of carriage and local laws. However, there are cases where unruly passengers who have been refused carriage on one carrier simply travel on another carrier and continue their journey.

In response to the surge in reported cases of unruly behavior associated with non-compliance with mask requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic, were calls by some for the establishment of a government-managed registers of unruly passengers. To date, there are only a handful of countries that have such registers to IATA's knowledge.

Overall, IATA's view is that in most cases, national 'no-fly' or similar unruly passengers registers are not the most effective means of addressing the issue of unruly and disruptive passengers for the following reasons:

- The main priority is for governments to a) fix the jurisdictional issues by ratifying MP14 and b) ensure that enforcement measures are in place and applied in practice, as appropriate
- National registers could detract from political and legislative efforts that could be devoted to a) and b) above, including any relevant policy consideration and implementation of civil and administrative penalties
- Managing and maintaining the registers could be legally complex, resource-intensive and costly, relative to the numbers of persons to which these types of interventions may apply.

Summary:

IATA believes that improving the existing jurisdictional and other practical barriers to enforcement are more effective use of precious legislative time and effort. However, where these have been overcome or where there is a specific request from airlines in that market, national registers may be a further measure that governments may wish to consider.

4. Preventing and managing incidents

Enhancing deterrence is important, but it is a medium to long-term endeavour. In the meantime, preventing disruptive incidents from happening in the first place is a key focus for the industry which recognizes it has an important role to play. Effective training for cabin crew, multi-stakeholder initiatives and associated awareness campaigns are important elements that can make a real difference to the avoiding, de-escalating, and/or managing unruly passenger incidents.

4.1. Training and guidance

IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) standards require that member airlines have a policy and procedures which address unruly behavior including as a minimum: Identifying, offloading, restraining, and reporting of unruly passengers. Guidance provided to support this standard includes the responsible service of alcohol.

IOSA training standards require that member airlines provide training on self-defence and the use of non-lethal protective devices (when carried) when managing such incidents. Guidance to support these standards includes the recommendation of competency-based scenarios and assessment.

IATA's Cabin Operations Safety Best Practices Guide provides detailed guidance to operators on the responsible service of alcohol, and recommended response to intoxication, along with full and detailed recommended responses to unruly behavior of all levels and suggested wording for formal warnings. While designed specifically to assist cabin crew, the Guide is also relevant to ground-based employees including check-in, gate and lounge staff. IATA also provides classroom training on disruptive passengers for ground staff and cabin crew.

In 2014, IATA passed a resolution at its Annual General Meeting in Doha, which called on member airlines to put in place the appropriate policies and procedures to ensure the consistent handling of unruly and disruptive passenger incidents across their network. This included de-escalation training to help diffuse incidents, safe service of alcohol and finally restraint training (including use of restraint devices) when other interventions had failed or where safety and security were in immediate danger. These are widely implemented across the IATA membership. In some jurisdictions, airlines are mandated by their national authority to provide initial and recurrent training for cabin crew relating to unruly passengers.

4.2. Multi-stakeholder initiatives

Another element of IATA's effort is to work with other stakeholders to ensure that other parties in the value chain understand they have an important role to play in preventing incidents. For example, this could include ensuring airport authorities, bars, restaurants, and duty-free outlets are promoting and selling alcohol responsibly and working with local airport police to put clear procedures in place so that there is clarity should unruly and disruptive passengers being delivered into police custody. Furthermore, it is essential that airlines ensure their handling staff and agents understand the need to monitor passenger behavior at check-in and at the boarding gate and communicate to flight and cabin crew any concerns they so that they can make an informed decision can be made to deny boarding. One of good practice example is the UK Industry Code of Conduct on Unruly and Disruptive Passengers which is detailed overleaf.

4.3. Awareness campaigns

As noted in Section 1, Annex 9 *Facilitation* contains Standards which require States to raise public awareness campaigns about prohibited unruly and disruptive conduct on flights and the resultant legal or other actions that may result. Airlines and other industry stakeholders can make use of materials produced to amplify messaging as they have with the EASA campaign. However, the industry has developed innovative creative

approaches to dealing with specific triggers to unruly and disruptive passenger. A good practice example of this is the “One Too Many Campaign” that IATA is part of in the UK which is explained in more detail on in the next page.

Another good example is IATA’s work with airports and other stakeholders at several airports in a campaign called “Fly Safely, Drink responsibly”, details of which can be provided on request.

Good practice example: UK Industry Code of Conduct on Unruly and Disruptive Passengers

IATA actively supports and promotes initiatives such as the [UK Industry Code of Conduct on Disruptive Passengers](#). This brings together airlines, airports, police, retailers and ground handlers that sign up to a range of commitments and actions to prevent and manage disruptive incidents. These include 1) setting out a zero-tolerance approach to unruly behaviour, 2) Supporting employees to identify, pre-empt, de-escalate, and manage incidents, 3) Making commitments on the sale and promotion of alcohol and iv) setting out measures to educate and communicate with passengers.

In the summer of 2015, airlines, airports, the police, the UK Civil Aviation Authority, government officials and a major airport retailer met to consider the problem. It was clear from the discussion that there was no coordinated national approach to the issue. This meant that passengers did not receive consistent messaging and good practice was not widely shared. This voluntary code of practice has been developed by members of Airlines UK, the Airport Operators Association, the Airport Police Commanders Group, the Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers and the UK Travel Retail Forum. The purpose of the Code is to create a common, consistent approach that coordinates and enhances existing efforts to prevent and minimize disruptive passenger behavior. Signatories to the Code participate voluntarily because they are committed to ensuring passengers have a consistently safe and enjoyable experience when flying for work or leisure, and to providing a safe and pleasant work environment for their employees.

Good practice example: One Too Many Campaign, UK

IATA has been involved in a unique high-profile and industry-led campaign called “One Too Many” in the UK which is an initiative that came from the UK Industry Code of Conduct on Unruly and Disruptive Passengers outlined above. According to UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) data, there were 417 cases of disruptive behavior on UK airlines in 2017, a 325% increase in reported incidents in four years, with intoxication highlighted as a key factor.

This UK government-endorsed awareness campaign by the UK Travel Retailers Forum, Airport Operators Association, Airlines UK, Board of Airlines representatives and IATA aimed to inform passengers of the consequences of irresponsible drinking when flying from 11 airports during peak summer travel period. This includes highlighting that an incident may result in a two-year prison sentence, a GBP5,000 fine, denied boarding, being banned by the airline, and covering an airlines costs incurred if a flight is diverted. Targeting specific age groups, the campaign made use of point of sale and posters in participating airports, duty free and food and beverage outlets. It also included innovative use of Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook as well as traditional media. The campaign generated over 100 articles in traditional media and 5.6 million impressions on social media.

There are signs that this campaign, combined with the UK Code of Practice, was having an impact. 2018 disruption figures were down, with some airports seeing incidents down by 30%. This is an example of best practice for any state and airline that may be facing issues with disruptive passengers on specific routes or at specific airports.



5. Resources and further reading

Treaties and ICAO materials

- [Tokyo Convention 1963](#)
- [Montreal Protocol 2014 \(available in official ICAO languages\)](#)
- [Combined text](#)
- [Lists of Parties to MP14](#)
- [ICAO Administrative Package for MP14 and Model Instruments of Ratification/Acceptance/Approval \(available in official ICAO languages\)](#)
- [ICAO Manual Document 10117 - Manual on the Legal Aspects of Unruly and Disruptive Passengers \(2019\)](#)
- [ICAO Assembly Resolution A41-4](#)

Other materials

- [IATA policy page](#)
- [FAA Statistics and digital tool kit associated with the "Zero tolerance" campaign](#)
- [UK Code of Practice on Unruly and Disruptive Passengers](#)
- [One Too Many Campaign](#)