

Cabin Safety Made Easy

Sterile Cockpit Comprehension

Sterile cockpit is a term describing specific critical phases of flight when the pilots need to maintain full concentration to the duties related to the safe operation of the aircraft and be free from unnecessary distractions or interruptions. By federal regulation, pilots are not permitted to engage in non-essential conversation or perform any other activities not related to the safe operation of the aircraft.

Critical phases of flight includes all ground operations involving taxi, take off and landing, and all other flight operations conducted below 10,000 feet, except cruise flight. Taxi is defined as “movement of an airplane under its own power on the surface of an airport”.

Except for safety related situations, Flight Attendants may not contact or enter the cockpit during critical phases of flight as defined above. There are times, however, when the rule of sterile cockpit may be interrupted. You may interrupt sterile cockpit when information directly relating to the safety of the flight needs to be conveyed immediately to the Captain.

The following situations are taking place during the period defining sterile cockpit. Using your judgment in the examples, indicate whether you should interrupt sterile cockpit :

| Scenario: | Interrupt sterile cockpit? | |
|---|----------------------------|----|
| You look out the window and notice fluid leaking from the wing | YES | NO |
| Passenger says “I forgot my bag – I need to go back to the terminal” | YES | NO |
| You observe a continuous fire coming from an engine | YES | NO |
| You forgot to ask the flight time and want to make a post departure announcement | YES | NO |
| Passenger says he is having a heart attack | YES | NO |
| Unusual vibration and odor in the cabin | YES | NO |
| Passenger stands up after landing, takes his bag, goes to the exit area and refuses to return to his seat | YES | NO |
| You notice visible damage to the wing | YES | NO |
| Crewmember wants to write up a frayed carpet in the aircraft logbook | YES | NO |

While it is impossible to list every possible scenario, this should serve as a base for your judgment in determining when it is permissible to interrupt sterile cockpit.

Name _____

Date_____