The Flight Attendant Position on Airline Drinking Water

Public Meeting To Discuss the Development of Regulations for Aircraft Public Water Systems

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Overview

• Background (C. Witkowski)
  – Introduction
  – Laws and Regulations
  – Three Basic Business Models
  – Current Industry Situation

• Regulation vs. Reality (J. Grace)

• Recommendations (C. Witkowski)
Background

• Introduction
  – To a Flight Attendant, the cabin is a WORKPLACE
    • 3 Basic Priorities: Safety, Safety, and Safety
      – Safety announcements
      – Safety demonstrations
      – Evacuations and emergency situations
  • First Responder Duties
    – Medical emergencies (heart attacks, seizures, vomiting, etc.)
    – Communicable diseases (SARS, Avian Flu - TBD, etc.)
  • General cabin appearance and hygiene
  • Food, beverage and miscellaneous items distribution and/or sales
  • Passenger relations
Background

• Introduction
  – Why require running, potable water?
    • Hand Washing
      – Following use of lavatories
      – Prior to / following food preparation
      – Prior to / following food and beverage service
      – Following trash pickup (many carriers DO NOT allow use of disposable gloves)
      – Following medical emergency situations
    • In-flight clean up of spills, bodily fluids
    • Food (e.g., ramen), coffee and tea preparation
    • Use by some crew and pax for brushing teeth
Background

• Introduction
  – Flight Attendants have been affected by
    • Stress resulting from
      – Bankruptcies
      – Furloughs and layoffs
      – “High efficiency” operations
    • Communicable diseases
      – SARS
      – Avian Influenza
      – Childhood diseases such as measles, chicken pox, etc.
      – TB, meningitis
Background

• Laws and Regulations
  – EPA
    • Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)
    • Water Supply Guidance 29
    • Administrative Orders on Consent
    • Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
Background

• Laws and Regulations

TITLE 21--FOOD AND DRUGS
CHAPTER I--FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
SUBCHAPTER L--REGULATIONS UNDER CERTAIN OTHER
ACTS ADMINISTERED BY THE FOOD AND DRUG
ADMINISTRATION

PART 1250 -- INTERSTATE CONVEYANCE SANITATION*

*per http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfcfr/CFRSearch.cfm?CFRPart=1250
Background

• Laws and Regulations
  – Subpart B--Food Service Sanitation on Land and Air Conveyances, and Vessels
    • Sec. 1250.28 Source and handling of ice.
      – Ice coming in contact with food or drink and not manufactured on the conveyance shall be obtained from sources approved by competent health authorities. All ice coming in contact with food or drink shall be stored and handled in such manner as to avoid contamination.
Background

• Laws and Regulations
  • Sec. 1250.32 Food-handling operations.
    – (a) All food-handling operations shall be accomplished so as to minimize the possibility of contaminating food, drink, or utensils.
    – (b) The hands of all persons shall be kept clean while engaged in handling food, drink, utensils, or equipment.
Background

• Laws and Regulations

• Sec. 1250.38 Toilet and lavatory facilities for use of food-handling employees.

  – (a) Toilet and lavatory facilities of suitable design and construction shall be provided for use of food-handling employees. Railroad dining car crew lavatory facilities are regulated under 1250.45.

  – (b) Signs directing food-handling employees to wash their hands after each use of toilet facilities shall be posted so as to be readily observable by such employees. Hand washing facilities shall include soap, sanitary towels and hot and cold running water or warm running water in lieu of hot and cold running water.

  – (c) All toilet rooms shall be maintained in a clean condition.
Background

• Laws and Regulations
  – Subpart C--Equipment and Operation of Land and Air Conveyances
    • Sec. 1250.41 Submittal of construction plans.
      – Plans for the construction or major reconstruction of sanitary equipment or facilities for such conveyances shall be submitted to the Commissioner of Food and Drugs for review of the conformity of such plans with the requirements of this subpart, except that submittal of plans shall not be required for any conveyance under reconstruction if the owner or operator thereof has made arrangements satisfactory to the Commissioner of Food and Drugs for inspections of such conveyances while under reconstruction for the purpose of determining conformity with those requirements.
Background

• Laws and Regulations
  – Subpart C--Equipment and Operation of Land and Air Conveyances
    • Sec. 1250.49 Cleanliness of conveyances.
      – Conveyances while in transit shall be kept clean and free of flies and mosquitoes. A conveyance which becomes infected with vermin shall be placed out of service until such time as it shall have been effectively treated for the destruction of the vermin.
Background

• Laws and Regulations
  – FDA Guide to Inspections of Interstate Carriers and Support Facilities
    http://www.fda.gov/ora/inspect_ref/igs/icsf.html
    • interim guidance for the conduct of Interstate Travel Sanitation (ITS) program activities
    • program objective: ensure that personnel, facilities and equipment are adequate, and managed, to prevent foodborne illness, and the introduction or spread of communicable disease via common carriers operating in interstate commerce
Background

- Laws and Regulations
  - FDA Guide to Inspections of Interstate Carriers and Support Facilities
    - Section 7 - Construction of Equipment, Conveyances and Support Facilities, B. Conveyance Construction
      - … Review plans and inspect conveyance construction to determine the sanitary acceptability of food, water, and waste handling systems. … Maintain contact with builders and carriers to ensure that specifications and construction plans are submitted early during design phases to evaluate conformance and analyze problem areas. The early submission of specifications and plans is essential, as it is easier to correct defects on paper than on existing structures. …
Background

• Laws and Regulations
  – FDA Guide to Inspections of Interstate Carriers and Support Facilities
    • Section 7 - Construction of Equipment, Conveyances and Support Facilities, C. Frequency of Inspection
      – Aircraft - Construction inspections of aircraft are concentrated on the prototype or first production aircraft. Inspect the aircraft as necessary during construction to ensure compliance. The initial inspections include the drinking water system and sewage system. Inspect these after initial installation so the complete system may be evaluated. Make the next inspections as the galleys are being installed so the galleys and installation may receive a final evaluation. Include other areas of sanitary significance of the aircraft in these inspections. Make subsequent inspections of all similar production units only as necessary to ensure continued adherence to good sanitary practices.
Background

• Laws and Regulations
  – FAA
    • Airworthiness certificate
      – FAA document authorizing operation of an aircraft in flight
    • Minimum Equipment List (MEL)
      – Specifies which equipment can be inoperative when an airplane is dispatched
      – Also specifies the maximum length of time before repairs must be effected on inoperative equipment
      – Potable water and Lavatory waste systems on most aircraft are designated Category C, allowing an airplane to fly up to 10 consecutive days before these systems must be repaired
Background

• Three Basic Business Models
  – Regional Carriers
    • Mostly domestic, regional service
    • 20 – 100 passenger aircraft
      – Typically 30 min to 4 hr flight times
      – High daily flight frequency – “Efficient”
      – Minimal or no break time
      – Beverage service
      – Minimal or no food service
    • Lavatories and galleys may lack running water, soap
Background

• Three Basic Business Models
  – Discount Carriers
    • Mostly domestic, regional and nationwide service
    • Typically 100 – 200 passenger aircraft
      – 1 hr to 6 hr flight times
      – High daily flight frequency – “Efficient”
      – Minimal or no break time
      – Snack and beverage service
    • Lavatories generally have running water and soap
Background

• Three Basic Business Models
  – Major Carriers
    • Domestic and International service
    • 100 – 500 seat aircraft
    • 1 – 18 hour flights
    • Long flights typically offer full food / beverage services
    • Sanitation and Hygiene Facilities
      – Lavatories typically have running water and soap
      – Galleys fully equipped
Background

• Current Industry Situation
  – Lavatory Issues
    • Some airlines identify non-potable water with placards
      – Children, non-English speakers unlikely to understand
      – Brushing teeth is problematic
    • Some aircraft equipped without running water systems
      – Wet wipes insufficient for post-toilet hygiene
    • Sanitation often questionable
  – Galley Issues
    • Non-potable water for hand washing and cleaning utensils is inadvisable
    • Poor sanitary conditions in ice bins, ovens, beverage carts, etc.
Background

• Current Industry Situation
  – International Travel
      – 2004: 763 million people crossed international borders, an increase of 73% over 15 years
      – 20 – 60% of visitors to resource-poor regions will have traveler's diarrhea because of widespread contamination of food and drink
      – not all travel-related infectious disease from resource-poor regions
        » Legionellosis – hotel stays in the Mediterranean
        » Norovirus – cruise ships
        » Cryptosporidiosis – exposure to water in swimming pools
Regulation vs. Reality

• Remember those Federal Regulations?

• So what’s the Reality?
Regulation vs. Reality

Buy on Board
Toothbrush Kit

The five spot list

Dental kit
Fresh N' Go™ travel toothbrushes contain up to 30 uses of toothpaste in the handle—just turn the crank to dispense toothpaste, then brush! Includes two toothbrushes with snap-on caps, one whitening and one regular, plus a Fresh N' Go dental floss pocket pack.

Origami
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – EPA rules pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act

• The Reality: FA at Regional carrier, Canadair RJ
  – “Once we started flying aircraft with galley potable water, I started packing my own green tea to drink on board. The luxury of hot water was new to us as a regional carrier, and many FA’s did the same, making hot chocolate and even ramen noodles using the onboard galley water. I started noticing after a few weeks that after returning home from a trip, usually the day after, I would have intense abdominal cramps and diarrhea. I didn’t attribute this to work at first, but after a couple months of this cycle I decided to stop drinking the hot water (and coffee made from the water) onboard aircraft. I haven’t had any problems since then, and while this is far from scientific, I believe that my symptoms were directly related to my frequent exposure to on board potable water….\”
Regulation vs. Reality

CRJ 700
Coffee Pot
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – EPA rules pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act

• The Reality: FA at Major carrier, Boeing 747
  – “Upon filling up the water pitchers on the ground, I noticed that the water from the taps had a brownish colour to it. … the same occurrence took place with the hot water which I brewed. After letting the water flow out of the tap for a lengthy period of time and rebrewing the hot water a couple of times the mechanics were content with the resulting visible clearing up of the water. … The people in charge of the flight obviously did not want to take a delay, but assured(?) me that they would do a quick(?) cleaning of the tanks. With about 10mins to go before departure, that was very hard for me to believe. … after take off, the water from the taps and the brewers was browner than before… Shockingly, an on time departure was preferred over cleaning of the tanks/pipes or providing the entire economy cabin of 163 pax with bottled or alternate drinking water …”
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – EPA rules pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act

• The Reality: FA at Major carrier, Boeing 747
  – “Water quality onboard was very poor. Passengers and crew all complained about a strong chlorine smell in the water and a bad taste when they drank water from the galley faucets.”
Regulation vs. Reality

Embraer 140
Ice Tray in Galley
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.28 Source and handling of ice: “… All ice coming in contact with food or drink shall be stored and handled in such manner as to avoid contamination.”

• The Reality: FA at discount carrier, Multiple aircraft types
  – “At our hubs, the ice is dumped in white plastic bags in the ice bins. The ice is NOT in sealed bags. They then just twist the plastic. We routinely untwist the plastic when putting the ice bin on the cart and there is dirt, black water, in the ice. We have to use it!!! … Also, we routinely have no scoops, and use cups to scoop and while scooping the ice our hands are in it. … One time a bandaid I had on MY finger came off, I didn't realize it and gave the pax a drink and the band aid was floating in the drink – all because we weren’t boarded ice scoops. … The bins the ice is put in are used over and over, I have seen scummy moldy water floating around those bins. … If the food and drink we serve on A/C were served under the same conditions on land, the business would be shut down by health inspector.”
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.32 Food-handling operations: (a) All food-handling operations shall be accomplished so as to minimize the possibility of contaminating food, drink, or utensils. (b) The hands of all persons shall be kept clean while engaged in handling food, drink, utensils, or equipment.

• The Reality: FA at Regional carrier, Canadair RJ
  – “...there is never any LAV soap in the soap dispensers in the CRJ LAV. It is quite embarrassing when passengers come out of the LAV and approach me to tell me that there isn't any type of hand soap or antibacterial hand wipes to clean their hands with...furthermore, it's not only myself who has been placed in this situation, but rather all FA's who fly the line and on the CRJ. We do fill out those surveys that are placed in the galley or cockpit. Although, preflighting those LAV soap dispensers is not in our FA manual, nor is it a duty requirement...I have taken it upon myself to add/make checking for LAV soap a preflight item and documenting the lack of it on those cards.”
Regulation vs. Reality

ATR 72 galley
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.32 Food-handling operations: (a) All food-handling operations shall be accomplished so as to minimize the possibility of contaminating food, drink, or utensils. (b) The hands of all persons shall be kept clean while engaged in handling food, drink, utensils, or equipment.

• The Reality: FA at Discount carrier, Multiple aircraft types
  – “It has become [the airline's] practice to not have ground or APU power when at the gate. This presents a problem of no water in the galley or lav. I've brought this to the company's attention, requesting wet wipes to be put in the lavs. They say that the crew members have access to them once they are in the galley. So, the crew member uses the lav.....leaves touching the door and the galley cabinets along with what ever has to be moved to find the wet wipes. They have now spread the germs that were on the hands to every thing they have come in contact with. The passenger who uses the lav has no option but to leave without cleaning their hands.”
Regulation vs. Reality

Embraer 140
Lavatory
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.32 Food-handling operations: (a) All food-handling operations shall be accomplished so as to minimize the possibility of contaminating food, drink, or utensils. (b) The hands of all persons shall be kept clean while engaged in handling food, drink, utensils, or equipment.

• The Reality: FA at Regional carrier, Fairchild-Dornier 328
  – “We do have sinks, but they have disabled the water supply. It was just a jug in the cabinet anyway. Not hot or fresh. The company installed a waterless hand sanitizer for the passengers and wet naps. In our contract the flight attendants are supplied with antibacterial hand sanitizer in little bottles and antibacterial wipes. We order supplies for the lavatory and restock it ourselves.”
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.32 Food-handling operations: (a) All food-handling operations shall be accomplished so as to minimize the possibility of contaminating food, drink, or utensils. (b) The hands of all persons shall be kept clean while engaged in handling food, drink, utensils, or equipment.

• The Reality: FA at Major carrier, Airbus 320
  – “There was no water for a 4:59 scheduled flight. Pilots advised this had been noted in their log book for SIX (6) DAYS. We do not know why this mechanical/safety issue had not been addressed. Although sanitary wipes … were boarded prior to take-off; this was not acceptable.”
Regulation vs. Reality

Embraer 140
Lavatory –
Warning not to
drink the water
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.38 Toilet and lavatory facilities for use of food-handling employees: (a) Toilet and lavatory facilities of suitable design and construction shall be provided for use of food-handling employees. … (b) … Hand washing facilities shall include soap, sanitary towels and hot and cold running water or warm running water in lieu of hot and cold running water.

• The Reality: FA at Regional carrier
  – Embraer RJ: “The only water source is in the lavatory – water is not heated and dispenses cold – sink is placarded with small icon of a person drinking water with a red line through it. Placard is the size of a 50 cent piece…”
  – Saab 340: “No sinks- wet wipes used as standard hand cleaning device in lavatory and galley. These are not always anti-bacterial. Water tanks removed years ago.”
Regulation vs. Reality

CRJ 700
Lavatory
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.38 Toilet and lavatory facilities for use of food-handling employees: (b) … Hand washing facilities shall include soap, sanitary towels and hot and cold running water or warm running water in lieu of hot and cold running water. …

• The Reality: FA at Regional carrier, Multiple aircraft types
  – “At my carrier, more than 50% of in-service aircraft are dispatched with empty potable water tanks. Because we are a regional airline, our schedules are created to maximize operational efficiency, leaving little or no time for the crew to step off the aircraft between flights. As a result, we are dependent upon our aircraft lavatories and galleys for sanitation throughout the day. Without potable water on board, we are unable to wash our hands before serving food and drink, after collecting trash items, or after using the lavatory. The use of wet wipes is common, but the wipes are not effective against many forms of bacteria and viruses. My carrier does not allow the use of gloves for food or trash handling, even though we have asked repeatedly for gloves on board.”
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.38 Toilet and lavatory facilities for use of food-handling employees: (b) … Hand washing facilities shall include soap, sanitary towels and hot and cold running water or warm running water in lieu of hot and cold running water. …

• The Reality: FA at Regional carrier, Boeing MD88
  – “Water is always cool, faucet handle must be held down to run the water so only one hand can be rinsed at a time…”
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.38 Toilet and lavatory facilities for use of food-handling employees: (b) … Hand washing facilities shall include soap, sanitary towels and hot and cold running water or warm running water in lieu of hot and cold running water. …

• The Reality: FA at Regional carrier, Embraer RJ
  – “My crew asked for portable water on several occasions and the company said they would not fill the water in cold weather. … Pax complained every flight. Especially after using the Lav. One Pax spilled his drink (tomato juice ewwww!) and we really needed ‘something’ then. Couple cans of club soda helped.”
Regulation vs. Reality

Embraer 140
Lavatory
Toilet
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.38 Toilet and lavatory facilities for use of food-handling employees: (b) … Hand washing facilities shall include soap, sanitary towels and hot and cold running water or warm running water in lieu of hot and cold running water. …

• The Reality: FA at Major carrier, Multiple aircraft types
  – “This … encompasses ALL flights where water pressure in not available … at the gate. … It is my understanding that the pilots have been told NOT to give the aircraft water pressure … while on the ground unless certain conditions exist, as a cost savings measure. … The placard on the galley wall … clearly states that we are required to wash our hands. It does not stipulate to wait until water is turned on or becomes available. Additionally, passengers and flight crew use the rest rooms frequently… Pilots have … said they will give water pressure when a. passengers board, b. it gets hot enough, c. if they want coffee. I have been told to use bottled water to rinse my hands after going to the bathroom … I have been told to ‘stock the bathroom with club soda’ so FA's and pax can wash. I have had to explain that I need to wash my hands after bodily functions occur and then I have to check food provisions in the galley BEFORE departure and most often before passengers arrive…”
 Regulation vs. Reality

- **The Regulation**
  - FDA Sec. 1250.38 (c) All toilet rooms shall be maintained in a clean condition.

- **The Reality: FA at Regional carrier, Bombardier Dash 8**
  - “The lavs are filthy. … The area around the seat, under the seat, on the wall, on the floor, even the bowls haven't been scrubbed in months. The kleenex box is stuck to the side panel because of the spray grime… [O]n overnight cleaning at [out]stations … there is no cleaning done at all. Not even a wipe down. While on the line, after the lav dump, the rampee comes onto the aircraft, barely opens the door, and extensively sprays the whole area with some compound. Have no idea what this is. The mist settles on the sidewalls, the seat, the lid everywhere, leaving a slimey moist mess. No wiping is done whatsoever. This is the problem and this is the grime slime that covers the lav area. A lav dump should consist of dumping the lav, filling it with fluid and then coming on board to check to see if there is fluid. Then they can spray for smell, BUT they must then take paper towels and wipe the entire area of the lav down with disinfectant. It can't be an old rag that they use on every lav.”
Regulation vs. Reality

A-320
Lavatory Sink
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.38 (c) All toilet rooms shall be maintained in a clean condition.

• The Reality: FA at Major carrier, Airbus 320
  – “aft lav gushed water the entire flt, was supposedly fixed at [airport1] before departure by shutting off water valve, but it continued to flood the entire flight. my flying partners and i felt very unsafe with all that water on the galley floors, not just because someone could fall, but because of potential issues with the water affecting wiring or electronics. we communicated this to the pilots, and again supposedly the problem was fixed by mechanics overnight at [airport2] (that's what we were told). however, we still had a river of water flowing out of the aft lav on the return flight. very disgusting to work on a wet, smelly carpet....”
Regulation vs. Reality

Would you use this toilet?
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.38 Toilet and lavatory facilities for use of food-handling employees: … (c) All toilet rooms shall be maintained in a clean condition.

• The Reality: FA at Discount carrier, Boeing DC9
  – “The 9 is ancient to begin with and instead of thoroughly cleaning them they tend to just paint over the dirt. There are times where the flap in the toilet is missing which can allow the blue water to splash into the floor during turbulence or hard landings or even when it has become too full due to no service.”
Dried vomit on a CRJ Carpet
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.49 Cleanliness of conveyances: Conveyances while in transit shall be kept clean…

• The Reality: FA at Major carrier, Boeing 777 (1 of 2)
  – “[T]he a/c had arrived w/serious lavatory problems. Lavatories at 3L and 3R had greatly overflowed leaving human waste/excrement upon the carpet in front of the lavatories as well as under the first few rows of Zone B in Economy. The inbound crew had used the infection control kit to attempt to better the situation. Passengers were nauseated by the smell and complained as such. As I boarded, there were many people about the area [CSRs, Supervisor, maintenance workers, cabin cleaners]. During briefing in First Class, [Supervisor] approached and wanted to ‘relay some information.’ He joked about the situation … claimed that the BIOHAZARD cleanup procedures had been followed. He went on to say that the liquid w/in the lavatory system disinfected anything it came in contact with … no threat was posed. F/As expressed concern about this re-occurring should this a/c take flight. [Supervisor] reiterated his stance that the a/c was airworthy, despite the horrible stench throughout most of economy class. He claimed that the cabin cleaners had a ‘multi-million dollar machine called the Sucker’ to properly clean the area…
Regulation vs. Reality

- The Reality: FA at Major carrier, Boeing 777 (2 of 2)
  - “CS wanted to board so following f/a complaints about the soiled carpeting and smell, a mechanic came aboard w/masking tape and taped off the first three rows of zone B in Economy. Lavatories that had caused problems were also locked off (total 4 INOP). As passengers boarded many commented on the stench. Various passengers close to the taped off area opted to get off the a/c due to the smell. A Customer Sup was called to hear complaints. He had the CSR make an announcement allowing passengers to deplane if they chose as, ‘the odor in Economy could not be controlled.’ Various passengers deplaned. The f/a's were told the situation was remedied and the a/c could depart. More passengers complained during the safety demo of the smell. Immediately following take off waste began to again leak out from under the INOP lavatory doors at 3L and 3R. The stench became overwhelming and many passengers complained of nausea. This was all conveyed to the cockpit via the purser. The cockpit opted to return the a/c to the gate. The flight was cancelled as was previously suggested. [A supervisor] met the f/a's for support. No Supervisor, CS or otherwise, explained the situation to the passengers. They were instead directed to a new gate by the CSR who opened the door. The CSR went on to say there were only coach seats left and upgrades would be impossible. Passengers deplaned.”
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.49 Cleanliness of conveyances: Conveyances while in transit shall be kept clean…

• The Reality: FA at Major carrier, Boeing 747
  – “Received a written document from cockpit that the upper deck galley drain was inoperative and therefore was secured closed with duck tape. Upon takeoff, dirty water spilled over seats 26ABGH in [business] and the first 3 rows in economy … including flight attendant jumpseats at doors 3L/R. This incident began again about 1 hr prior to arrival … in which this time water started dripping at a faster rate from above, resulting in getting the pax quite wet … water also began falling on the pax seated a few rows forward, seats 25AB and 24AB. This plane should have been taken out of service for maintenance … never should have been allowed to turn around and leave 3 hrs later back to [foreign airport] … Once again, it encountered that same problem. Once the plane arrived … the following day, this major issue was ignored, and the plane returned to [US airport].”
Regulation vs. Reality

B-777
Lavatories and Galley
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FDA Sec. 1250.49 Cleanliness of conveyances: Conveyances while in transit shall be kept clean…

• The Reality: FA at Major carrier, Boeing 757
  – “Inbound crew … explained that pax … defecated on himself … lost control of his functions, then panicked by taking his clothes off and touching everything in sight. The contamination of the first class cabin, galley, lav, & cockpit was the MOST EXTREME case imaginable. The odor was horrific even in the cockpit. Feces were visible on seats 1 A&B, armrests, f/c floor, F/A jumpseats (inside & out), interphone, Door 1L handle & slidepan, wall in front of F/A J/S, galley floor & counter, F/C Lav sink, floor, walls and door. Basically from 1 A & B forward. Despite this, CS & OPS wanted to board the plane. The flight should not have gone. CS blocked F/C as the seats, food, etc. were contaminated. Cleaners only had air fresheners and NOT the DISINFECTANTS needed to clean the plane.”
Regulation vs. Reality

ATR 72
Lavatory
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FAA MEL deferral of lavatory maintenance

• The Reality: FA at Major carrier, A/C not identified
  – “FA reports that this airplane flew around the system with a broken water pipe for 12 days. There was tape over the lavatory sinks, toilets did not flush, no drinking water, and galley drains inop. [Company's] solution was to board bottled water and handi-wipes. FA feels this was a health hazard.”
Regulation vs. Reality

B-777 Galley
Regulation vs. Reality

• The Regulation
  – FAA MEL deferral of lavatory maintenance

• The Reality: FA at Major carrier, Boeing 747
  – “FA reports that the fluid from the upper deck lavatory leaked continuously down the wall into the first class galley. After reporting it to the cockpit, he was told that it had been leaking since December.”
Recommendations

- EPA, FDA and FAA should coordinate closely, through a Memorandum of Understanding or some equivalent method, to ensure that galley and lavatory water coming out of faucets on board aircraft is potable and sufficient for the foreseeable needs of all passengers and crew, and that all occupied areas of the aircraft meet at least minimum standards of sanitation and hygiene at the time of passenger boarding.
- EPA should support an independent testing program to evaluate water quality on commercial airlines.
- Regulatory authorities should require installation of potable, running water systems in lavatories and galleys of all transport category airplanes.
Recommendations

• FDA should evaluate the potential for using AOCs as means to enforce existing regulations on airline galley, lavatory and cabin sanitation and equipment configurations.

• Lavatory and galley systems should be at least MEL B Category items (repair within 72 hours), with food service cancelled until onboard running water and soap are available.

• FDA/FAA should mandate sufficient break time for flight attendants to use airport facilities if onboard lavatories lack running water or soap, or are out of service for maintenance.