

BlueNote: Flight 1052 Slide Deployment

Dear Crewmembers,

I know many of you have questions and concerns about the slide deployment incident that occurred this past Monday on Flight 1052, PIT-JFK. I want to tell you why it has taken until today to communicate with you. We know there is usually far more to the story than first reports would indicate. We owe it to JetBlue Crewmembers not to rush to judgment and, instead, uncover the facts.

I would like at this time to share what we know, what we don't know, and reiterate some of our long-held policies and procedures.

First – what we know. Unfortunately, the list is fairly short on data that we feel reasonably comfortable is true. We believe the R-1 slide was intentionally armed and deployed on Flight 1052, PIT-JFK on Monday, August 9. We know the aircraft blocked into the gate at 12:07 pm ET, and L-1 door was opened without incident and Customers were deplaning. At 12:12 pm ET, the Flight Crew reported the slide deployment. At 12:15 pm ET, the Flight Crew reported that the slide deployment appeared to be intentional, and asked that Corporate Security be notified. At 12:34 pm ET, JFK Ops called the Port Authority Police Department. Some news reports take issue with the “delay” in calling the police. It isn't our policy to call police on a slide deployment; our policy is to treat the event as an emergency and implement our emergency response plan. The moment we confirmed the safety of the Customers and Crew – both onboard and on the ground – it became a matter for the police.

Later that day, Steven Slater, the F1 (Inflight Crewmember in position 1) from that flight was taken into custody and criminal charges were brought against him. To clear up any misunderstanding about that, JetBlue has no decision-making authority about bringing charges, as this matter is now being investigated by the local authorities.

That is the short list of what we believe is true. There's much more to this story that we don't know, including: Was there an altercation on the flight that precipitated or motivated Mr. Slater's action? It's unclear. No one has stepped forward to tell their side of the story, and multiple Customers from different areas of the cabin have given interviews that tell a different story. It's difficult to know with certainty what really happened.

Let me just say this: JetBlue will always seek to prosecute people who physically harm or threaten to harm a Crewmember or Customer. Period. Safety is not just our #1 Value, it has to be our way of life, and we must see everything through the Safety lens. No one at JetBlue should ever feel unprotected in this kind of situation. We are actively participating in the investigation, and we are conducting our own, to find the other half of Mr. Slater's story and get his/her account. However, if Mr. Slater's story proves to be accurate, and even if there was a precipitating event that motivated his behavior, that still doesn't excuse his actions.

There is no excuse for endangering Crewmembers and Customers in response to a challenging service situation. Intentionally arming and deploying an evacuation slide for anything other than the express purpose of protecting the safety of our Crew and Customers is unacceptable. It will not, and can not, be tolerated. I've always believed that we as a company must be overwhelming in our response to any violation of Safety, and this situation is no different.

The most distressing aspect of the media coverage has been the lightness with which they are treating the deployment of the emergency slide. Slides deploy extremely quickly, with enough force to kill a person. Slides can be as dangerous as a gun, and that's the reason we have intensive initial and recurrent training. It is an insult to all aviation professionals to have this particular element of the story treated without the seriousness it deserves.

I know this episode does not reflect the professional and sincere service you deliver to our Customers every day, every flight. I welcome your feedback, and please talk with your Crewleader if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Rob Maruster
EVP-Chief Operating Officer
JetBlue Airways