

IN-FLIGHT MOBILE PHONE CALLS FINALLY ALLOWED



Mobile phone has become a necessity for some people. It is not only business people who need to stay in touch, leisure tourists also want to stay in contact with their family. Airlines know it and they make steps to enable the travelers to use their mobile phones onboard the planes. On 20 March 2008, first "legal" mobile phone call was made from a commercial flight. It was made from an Emirates Airbus A340-300 aircraft. The Dubai based company has equipped the plane with the AeroMobile system that makes mobile phone calls during flight safe. The airline is going to invest some 27 million dollars to equip their fleet with the system. According to the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Emirates Airline and Group, Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Maktoum, the company is the world leader in innovation.

The Emirates' aircraft are already equipped with in-seat phones and email and text messaging capabilities via the in-seat entertainment system. The airline's customers are nowadays making approximately 7,000 calls a month from the in-seat phones and the possibility to use their own mobile phone should make the flight even more comfortable.

Travelers will, however, be allowed to make only some 5 or 6 calls and the services will not be active for the whole time of the flight. Passengers will also be reminded to switch their phones to silent or vibrate mode when used in the aircraft. The service will also enable the customers to send and receive SMS. Emirates and AeroMobile are cooperating to provide travelers even more services, among them will be e.g. the possibility to use BlackBerry to type an email and other GPRS data applications.

Other airlines are also working on improving their services. Australia's Qantas will make it possible for its customers to send text messages during the flight. Kingfisher Airline is among those who want to provide in-flight cell phones calls and Air India plans to provide this service well.

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