

Charles A. Emerging, FAA

As per our phone conversation, I am submitting in writing some of the issues we discussed regarding Quest Diagnostics Flight Operations. I was employed by Quest from February 2002 Until November 2005, during my tenure, I flew as a night specimen pilot and as a corporate pilot, later promoted to Training Manager.

As Training manager I was exposed to the real Quest Flight operations, what goes on when the meeting door is closed, so to speak? This is a department that likes to talk the talk, but not walk the walk. I was very outspoken about many of the issues I will list some below. Needless to say my position was eliminated, and I was given a severance package to go away!

1. I was asked by superiors to falsify training records, and just look the other way.
2. Weight and balance on the specimen aircraft was a constant issue.
3. Dry Ice, non standard amounts and too much onboard, we had many instances where pilots, including myself, had difficulty breathing and had to return to the field.
4. Training standards for Co Pilots were non existent.
5. Simulator training (for captains only) was accomplished at Simcom in FLA, and was done sparingly, just enough to fool the insurance company. For example, a pilot would accomplish King air recurrent, and that would also count as his Barron, and Cessna training. (Much like the recent crash victim, he was trained last in a Lear Jet, and that counted as his Barron training).
6. Winter Operations, there was a garden sprayer with glycol stored in the aircraft, along with a squeegee. Crews were expected to deice their own aircraft with unheated glycol, many of us would have the aircraft deiced professionally, but that was frowned upon by management.
7. There was constant pressure on the pilots to get the job done, (The Director of National Logistics said, "The mission is first and safety is second").(I overheard the Director chastise a pilot about missing an ILS approach at IAD "no one misses at dallas"). Most of the pilots are afraid to say anything or speak up; they are in constant fear for their jobs.
8. The schedules changed constantly, and there was little or no thought given to rest or circadian rhythms.

I could go on and on, but it's the same old story, they skirt or bend the rules to accomplish the mission, with a complete disregard for the human cost! I truly believe if the upper management had any idea what really went on in the Flight Operations department they would be appalled.

There are a lot of really good people, who hold it together. The maintenance is second to none! The safety officer tries very hard, but has his hands tied due to his advisory position, and thanks to some very skilled pilots, more accidents have been averted.

Sincerely

William (Bill) Welch
Former Training Manager

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P.S. You may contact me for further information,(it's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when, Quest has another Crash).