

IOE-GUIDE

Initial Operating Experience



THE AIRLINE ACADEMY

IOE (Initial Operating Experience)

The initial operating experience is the most important testing you will go through in initial flight attendant training.

This is your first flight that you will work on your own. It is a flight that you are tested by an IOE supervisor that will mirror you with a checklist to ensure that you can put into practice everything you have learned in training.

This is a test! You are not allowed to ask questions.

It is the final step to passing flight attendant training and receiving your wings. The following guide gives you a three-step process of information that is a guide of what to expect when being tested while in your IOE.

This is a general guide of what to expect.

Phase One of Flight: Pre-Flight

Flight Attendants must report to work anywhere between one hour before the flight for domestic and two hours prior for international flights. You will sign in at a designated area such as a flight attendant lounge or possibly even at the gate depending on the airport. To report you must ensure you have all required items with you such as your crew ID, passport, and a working wristwatch. You will meet your fellow crew members and the lead flight attendant will conduct a mandatory briefing. In the crew briefing, your lead flight attendant will discuss important information about your flight such as passenger counts, any special needs passengers, security concerns if any, and the service expectations. The crew will then sign up for jump seat positions in seniority order. Once the mandatory briefing has concluded you will walk to the gate for your flight.

Once the crew arrives at the gate the gate agent must check everyone in before you can board the airplane. The lead flight attendant will have a 30 second brief with the agent. The information included in this briefing should include boarding time, special assistance passengers who may need more time, and a strategy for bag stowage. Boarding times for domestic flights are 35 minutes before departure and international are 45 minutes before departure.

Once you are on the plane the first item that must be accomplished after stowing your luggage is a preflight check of your emergency equipment. Emergency equipment preflight check must be performed at the start of every duty period, every time you change aircraft and after aircraft has been left unattended by the flight crew or cabin crew for any extended period of time. You are responsible for all equipment that is closest to your assigned jump seat.

The flight leader and the captain must conduct a mandatory briefing. The best practice is for all crew members to be present however this is not always possible due to time constraints. At the minimum, the flight leader and captain will brief. The information included in this briefing is flight time, flight deck entry and exit procedures, weather en route, and any XCM (extra crew members). It is also a requirement for the captain and the flight leader to exchange a list of names of all crew.

If you are the galley flight attendant after all briefings and equipment have been checked you are responsible for checking all catering items. You must ensure you have everything you need for the service of the flight. Check all carts and carriers for catering supplies. Once all of these items are completed you are now ready for boarding as long as you have the minimum crew onboard the airplane. The minimum crew is a requirement for boarding (1 flight attendant for every 50 passenger seats is minimum crew). It's time to board!

Flight Attendants need to be evenly distributed throughout the cabin for boarding. You are responsible for an OT (on time) departure of the flight. Your responsibilities include greeting passengers, assisting with bag storage, and assist with any special needs passengers. It is not a requirement for you to lift a bag, only to assist. Exceptions to this are unaccompanied minors, passengers with disabilities, and the elderly. Keep in the cabin monitoring baggage storage and close the overhead bins as they fill up.

The flight attendant who is assigned the jump seat closest to the exit rows is also responsible for the exit row briefing. Exit row briefing should include a visual and verbal confirmation from each passenger of the following questions:

1. Are you aware you are seated in exit row seating?
2. Are you willing and able to assist in an emergency?
3. Do you have any questions about the exits?
4. Instruct them to look at the passenger safety information card and ask any questions they may have.
5. Everyone must answer verbally.
6. Notify the flight leader when this task is complete.

The exit row briefing must be accomplished before the boarding door can be closed. Should you have to check any bags at the boarding door because the bins are full make sure to ask passengers to remove any lithium batteries, e-cigarettes, and any items that may be needed in flight. Also, keep in mind all mandatory announcements need to be made during the boarding process and can be made by any flight attendant.

Once the agent arrives at the door all of the above tasks have to be completed. The boarding process is very fast-paced. The agent will come on board to give the captain his mandatory paperwork and he will, in turn, give the agent a flight release that he has signed. The agent must have the flight release to close the door. The lead flight attendant confirms with the agent that the cabin is secure for flight. This includes carryon baggage is properly stowed under the seat or in an overhead bin, all overhead bins are closed, and the exit row passengers have been visually and verbally assessed. At this time the cabin door can be closed. This concludes your first phase of flight, pre-flight. Now it's time to get to work!

Phase Two of Flight: In-Flight

Once the door has been closed by the agent the flight attendant at the boarding door must remain and monitor the jetway until it has been pulled away from the aircraft. As the jetway is pulled away the boarding door flight attendant will advise the flight leader. At this point, the flight leader will call all flight attendants to arm their doors for flight. This will be accomplished over the PA.

"Flight attendants prepare your doors for departure."

Then the flight leader will do a call to all flight attendants simultaneously. All flight attendants must be on the phone even if you are not responsible for a door. The flight leader will give any pertinent information about the flight or anything that has come up during boarding that may be important for all to know. Once all doors are ready to go for the flight the flight leader will then inform the Captain that the flight is ready to push back. When the flight leader advises the Captain that the aircraft is ready for pushback that means you are telling him that the following tasks have been accomplished:

- All passengers are seated with seatbelts fastened, tray tables stowed, and in-seat video monitors are stowed.
- Lavatories are not occupied
- All carts are stowed, and galley items secured.

The flight leader will close the cockpit door and give it a quick pull to ensure it is closed firmly.

Once the plane has started to push back the flight attendants will gather equipment for a manual safety demonstration or the flight leader will initiate the video safety demonstration. Even if there is a video demonstration the flight attendants have designated areas to report to while the video is being played. Once the demo is complete the flight attendants are then responsible for a final cabin check. Duties for the final cabin check include:

- Passenger seatbelts fastened
- Seat backs and tray tables upright and locked
- Aisle armrest down
- Laptop computers and large PED (portable electronic device) stowed.
- Video monitors stowed.
- Disposable service items picked up
- Galleys and carts are secured and latched
- Baggage stowed and bins closed
- Cabin lighting adjusted
- Lavatories are unoccupied

Once these tasks are completed the flight leader and all flight attendants will return to their assigned jump seats and strap in. The flight leader will now inform the captain that the aircraft is ready for takeoff. Flight attendants will remain seated during all remaining surface movement until the aircraft is above 10,000 feet.

Once the aircraft is above 10,000 feet the flight attendants may begin service preparation. The seatbelt light will still be on for the passengers at this time, but the flight attendants begin preparing for service. The flight leader will make all service announcements to inform the passengers of what to expect for the flight. The various services for the flight usually depend on the mileage of the flight. Service standards will be taught by your airline.

Always be mindful to check on all customers in designated intervals and take time to acknowledge your premium customers. Also, make sure to monitor your lavatories for supplies that may need to be replenished.

During the flight should the flight deck suspect there might be turbulence they will coordinate with the flight leader and develop a plan of action for all crew to follow. There are 3 types of turbulence to be aware of. Light, moderate and severe turbulence, flight attendants have procedures to follow to for each.

- **Light Turbulence:** Slight changes in altitude. In the cabin, objects may be displaced slightly. An example is liquid is shaking but not splashing out of the cup. Actions from the flight attendants will include, continuing service with caution and visually check the seatbelts of the passengers.
- **Moderate Turbulence:** Rapid bumps or jolts might occur. For example, liquids are splashing out of cups. Actions from the flight attendants include, discontinuing service, secure carts, and stow service items. Proceed to your jump seat and strap in including shoulder harness. Verbally advise customers to be seated and fasten seat belts.
- **Severe Turbulence:** Large abrupt changes in altitude. Unsecured items are tossed about. For example, liquid and cup may be launched from the counter or tray. The actions of the flight attendants include, immediately discontinuing any service and secure yourself in the nearest seat of any kind or drop to the floor and hold on. Do not walk around.

Remember turbulence is a regular and everyday occurrence in aviation. Sometimes it can be predicted and sometimes it cannot. Communication between the flight deck and the flight attendants is key to help minimize turbulence related injuries. Be aware, communicate, and if you do not feel safe then sit down and call the flight deck.

Phase Three of Flight: Pre-Arrival & Landing

Approximately 20-30 minutes prior to arrival, the Captain will make a public announcement and that is your indication it is time to wrap up all services and prepare for landing. The shorter time is for domestic flights with a little more time given to international due to more duties and larger planes. Service will be discontinued at that time, apologize to the customers who may not have received service. This can happen if it is a short flight or may have been disrupted by weather.

The pilot's PA will be followed up with a PA by the flight leader. This is the point the flight attendants will pick up all service items and secure the carts and galleys for landing. Waste carts can still be in the aisle during initial descent but must be stowed before landing. The flight leader will also return any premium customer coats and jackets and ensure the storage compartments are secured. The flight deck will signal the crew when the plane is at 10,000 feet. At this point you will begin final cabin checks. Which include:

- Collect any remaining service items
- Secure galleys
- Secure curtain or cabin dividers
- Verify lavatories are not occupied
- Visually access exit rows
- Passenger seat belts
- Passenger seatbacks, tray tables and video monitors are stowed.
- Laptop computers and other large PEDs are stowed
- Adjust cabin lighting

Flight attendants will then be seated at their assigned jump seat. You will remain seated until the aircraft reaches the gate unless you are performing a safety related duty. The flight leader will make appropriate announcements as the aircraft taxis to the gate.

Once the aircraft reaches the gate the flight leader will inform the flight attendants to disarm their doors for arrival. He/she will only make this announcement once the airplane is at a complete stop and the jetway begins to move toward the boarding/exit door. When the customer service agent reaches the aircraft door they will signal to the inside flight attendant that they are there and the flight attendant will signal back to them that it is safe to open the door.

The flight attendants at the exit door will monitor process of disembarking. You may need to advise the customers if there are any adverse conditions regarding the jetway. All flight attendants will remain until all customers have disembarked. Special needs customers or unaccompanied minors will need assistance. Once everyone has disembarked flight attendants will do a sweep of the aircraft to make sure there aren't any persons left on board including checking the lavatories. Take a quick look as well for any items left onboard. The flight attendants then may gather their personal items and exit the aircraft. Turn in any items left behind by the passengers to the customer service agent inside the airport. Inform the customer service agent that all passengers and crew are off the airplane and shut the door to the jet bridge.

This concludes your phases of flight guidelines. At this point if you had only one flight for the day you will be released. If you are flying a multiple flight duty day you will proceed to your next gate and it will all begin again. There is flying that may have a single duty day or could fly multiple days. It all depends on your seniority and bidding preferences.

All of this will be part of your IOE. It will become second nature once you begin your flying career.

Example of IOE Checklist

This is the final step.

The IOE instructor will be observing this process in order for you to pass and receive your wings.

- Arrives on time for duty day with all accountable items
- Performs preflight safety checks
- Monitors carry-on baggage
- Observes and briefs exit seat customers during boarding and prior to door closure
- Performs safety demonstration and/or shows safety video after cabin door is closed
- Provides individual safety briefings to special needs passengers
- Ensures all cabin baggage is stowed, seat belts fastened, tray tables and seatbacks are in their upright and lock position
- Ensures galleys and lavatories are secure prior to surface movement and landing
- Identifies safety issues and problems and takes action to correct them
- Ensures all regulatory and compliance requirements are met
- Follows all procedures for arming/disarming doors

These are all safety related and they are checking for your awareness and knowledge of all procedures related to safety. Can you put your learning into practice on board the aircraft? This is a small example of items that the IOE supervisor will be looking for. Customer service will always come second to safety.

You are expected to provide service with a smile as well as perform all safety procedures.