

## Book Review

### **“Aviation Contaminated Air Reference Manual” (2007) By Captain Susan Michaelis ISBN 9780955567209**

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The Aviation Contaminated Air Reference Manual, by Captain Susan Michaelis, is the first-ever comprehensive and definitive attempt to document and encapsulate the problem of aircraft cabin air quality in one book. The problem of cabin air quality is complex, under-reported, and poorly understood. A significant part of the problem is a lack of authentic and published data. Hopefully this manual will fill at least a part of that lacuna.

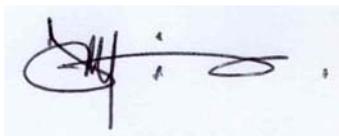
The Manual is organised into 29 chapters, and 12 appendices. The overall arrangement and organisation of the material may appear a bit overwhelming at first, but this could perhaps be attributed to the sheer volume of data that has been collected and presented. However the data is methodically set out in clearly labelled sections and is an important resource for those wanting to understand the particular issues involved with aircraft contaminated air.

The manual starts by explaining the basics of the problem, followed by extensive documentation of events where aircrew or passengers were exposed to, and/or affected by, toxic fumes inside an aircraft cockpit or cabin. The “events” data pertains to a wide range of aircraft operators in many countries spread across the globe. All data is extensively researched and referenced, with its source clearly identified. In fact one of the strengths of the Manual is its extensive referencing.

The Manual should be of interest to professionals dealing with the problem of health and well-being of not only the pilots and cabin attendants, but that of the travelling public at large. Occupational health professional, aircraft designers, and the regulators of civil and military aviation would find the contents informative, and perhaps help the aviation community address the problem, which goes well beyond being “just a nuisance” to causing genetic damage and leading to significant and long lasting neurological damage in some cases.

A notable and distressing element of the data is the widespread prevalence of denial of the existence of the problem, particularly among the aircraft operators and aviation regulators. In keeping with the advances made by the humanity in improving and maintaining the health and well being of people in their work places, and of the general public during their interaction with technology, it is not unreasonable to expect responsible professionals in all walks of life to have at least an open mind when presented with a “new” problem. It is hoped that this manual will spur an objective and closer look at the issues involved. This Manual should make any reader sit up and ponder, and perhaps neutralise some of the scepticism prevailing among some sections of society about the reality of this problem.

The manual is obviously a labour of love, and the dedication of the author is quite apparent, who needs to be commended for her ground-breaking and seminal work.



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