

## **JAL pilots failed alcohol tests 19 times since Aug. '17, causing 12 flight delays**

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TOKYO -- Japan Airlines Co. (JAL) pilots have failed breathalyzer alcohol tests on 19 occasions since August 2017, causing 12 domestic flight delays due to pilot switches, JAL officials have revealed to the Mainichi Shimbun.

The major airline introduced a new type of detector for in-house checks that month. The revelation comes on the heels of the arrest of a JAL co-pilot in London by British police in October this year for allegedly arriving for duty on a flight to Haneda Airport in Tokyo with alcohol levels above the legal limit.

As the co-pilot had never failed an alcohol check on the old type of breathalyzer, it is possible that deceiving the device was rampant among some pilots at the airline.

According to the company, the cause of the 12 delays was announced as "crew health conditions," and no mention was made about their breath alcohol levels. JAL, which is scheduled to have a press conference on Nov. 16 to reveal countermeasures to curb excessive drinking by pilots, will be hard pressed to explain the delayed flights in detail.

Current JAL regulations ban drinking within 12 hours of a flight, and obligate pilots to undergo breathalyzer tests before flying. In August last year, the airline introduced a new type of detector that checks breath blown through a straw, and records data via an internet connection.

In response to the London incident, JAL checked the stored data to find that 19 cases exceeded the alcohol limit of 0.1 milligrams per 1 liter of exhalation, resulting in 12 flight delays.

The airline's overseas offices used an old type of standalone detector that does not store data, and the pilot and co-pilot serving on the same flight crosscheck their test results. An individual close to the company said, "The new detectors found so many cases (of excess alcoholic levels among pilots), but I never heard about such instances when the old type was being used. I guess there is a possibility that people using the old detectors might have turned a blind eye to the excessive alcoholic readings of their colleagues." JAL suspects that the co-pilot arrested in London evaded detection by an illicit method.

Current aviation laws do not include provisions on standards for internal alcohol levels for pilots, or pre-flight tests. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism has set up a panel of experts to start discussions on these issues from Nov. 20, with an eye to introducing legal alcohol level standards and making alcohol tests mandatory.

## Tokyo 2020 Olympic organizers to change more event starting times to beat heat

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By Jack Tarrant

Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games organizers have formally proposed moving the start time of the marathon races and other events forward to avoid the worst of the Japanese capital's scorching summer heat.

The marathon events were initially scheduled to start at 7 a.m. local time but now Games organizers have asked the IAAF, athletics' governing body, to approve moving the start time to either 5.30 a.m. or 6 a.m. local. The Tokyo 2020 Games will run from July 24 – Aug 9. Temperatures in Tokyo reached a record 41.1 degrees Celsius (106 Fahrenheit) this year, with the July average reaching more than 30 degrees since 1998, according to the Japanese Meteorological Agency.

There were even calls to introduce daylight saving time for the Games. But with those plans squashed, an earlier start time is likely to appease athletes and spectators alike worried about the heat. The times for the rugby and mountain bike events have also been changed after the IOC's Coordination Commission took advice from a team of experts.

"Based on the proposals of the IOC's expert group, we are proceeding to recommended earlier starting times for the men's and women's marathons and the 20 kilometer race walk," said Tokyo 2020 President Yoshiro Mori in Tokyo on Wednesday.

All the morning rugby sessions will now start at 9 a.m., one and a half hours earlier than previously scheduled, with the cross-country cycling push back an hour into the early evening.

"It will continue to be front of mind for us and the organizers and front of mind for the teams that are coming here," added commission chair John Coates. "We will do everything possible to ensure they are not competing at risk."

Tokyo 2020 organizers are due to announce version three of the budget on Dec 21 and the swathe of heat counter-measures proposed, including increased shade for spectators and a heat-blocking surface to the road, will add to the costs involved.

"But I would be very confident that it would be a balanced budget, which in effect means the operating costs will not cost the taxpayers anything. The Olympic Games will have provided all the revenues for the operating costs."

The costs for the Games' venues, which are largely all running to schedule, will be absorbed by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and are separate to the operating costs.