

Philippine Airlines crew faces unprecedented lavatory crisis mid-Pacific

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: A Philippine Airlines flight from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport (MNL) experienced a full lavatory failure over the Pacific, forcing the crew to manually manage human waste in an unprecedented operational challenge. The incident occurred on flight PR113 earlier this month.

Crew members reported that all lavatories on the Boeing 777-300ER stopped functioning simultaneously. Sources said the captain considered a diversion but ultimately decided to continue to Manila, where the aircraft landed on time.

To prevent overflow and maintain restroom access, crew were reportedly instructed to manually remove waste and transfer it into adjacent lavatory basins. Aviation experts said there is no established

protocol from IATA, ICAO, or commercial carriers that endorses such measures. Concerns focus on biosecurity, sanitation, and occupational safety rather than passenger inconvenience.

The incident raised internal questions about operational decision-making. Crew unions said there was no post-incident review or follow-up from management. Criticism has been directed at the captain, the purser, and supervising personnel for handling the situation without clear professional guidelines.

Philippine Airlines has not publicly commented on the episode. Insiders say the lack of passenger complaints likely shielded the airline from regulatory scrutiny, but unions warn that leaving the situation unaddressed increases the risk of recurrence.

Lavatory failures are rare, and full-system malfunctions often trigger flight diversions. In this case, the decision to prioritize on-time arrival over safety protocols highlighted a growing tension in airline operations between efficiency and crew welfare.

Flight PR113 arrived in Manila without delay or customer disruption. However, aviation veterans emphasize that behind-the-scenes crises such as this underline the importance of crew training, preparedness, and clear emergency protocols for rare but serious technical failures.