

## Two Air India pilots grounded for allowing female friend inside cockpit

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In the second such case in less than six months, two other Air India pilots were grounded by the airline after they invited a female friend inside the cockpit of the flight.

The incident took place in a Delhi-Leh flight-bound flight last week and came to light only after a complaint was filed by the cabin crew regarding the entry of an unauthorised female passenger in the cockpit of the AI-445 aircraft.

“A female friend of AI-445 pilot entered the cockpit without following rules, both pilots have been grounded/off-roster by Air India,” a top Air India official told.

Air India, which has been getting into trouble for repeated cases of flying rules violations in the past few months, has not yet commented on the incident.

The airline’s management has reportedly acted against the pilot and the co-pilot and already formed a committee to probe the incident.

Responding to the incident, the Directorate of Civil Aviation (DGCA) told ANI, “DGCA is aware of the issue and necessary action is being taken in the matter by the procedures.”

Notably, the Leh route is one of the most sensitive air routes in India and thus, the entry of an unauthorised person inside the cockpit is a major lapse in terms of safety and security. It also amounts to a violation of the law

However, this is not the first such case where a friend of the pilot was given entry inside the cockpit.

Earlier in May, the DGCA suspended the license of an Air India Pilot for allowing a female friend into the cockpit during a Delhi-Dubai flight on February 27 for three months.

The airline was also fined Rs 30 lakh for lapses in effectively addressing the "safety-sensitive issue" related to the incident.

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