

Odd things you find when you read the airplane safety information card

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When I get on a plane, I make sure to study the safety information card, because there are some details that change from plane to plane. Where are the emergency exits? Is there one in the tail cone? Which ones are usable in the event of a water landing? And where is my flotation device?

On one flight, I studied the safety card, and one of the panels showed people in the water clinging to a raft. Everybody was wearing a life jacket, except one person, who was clutching a seat cushion.

Joke's on that guy. Because on this particular flight, the seat cushion is not a flotation device.

Maybe that guy is an Easter egg for people who study safety information cards. "Spot the guy who isn't going to make it."

There are curious discrepancies elsewhere, if you pay attention.

On our flight from Amsterdam to Seattle, the in-flight entertainment system listed the plane's range as 3,515 miles (5,657 km). It also listed the distance from Amsterdam to Seattle as 4481 miles.

Yet somehow, we managed to travel from Amsterdam to Seattle without stopping. Perhaps we traveled through a wormhole.

This isn't a "nautical miles vs statute miles" thing. It's just a "garbage data" thing. The actual flight distance was over 5000 miles. The people who entered the data for the in-flight entertainment system were lazy, and it was too much work to get the correct numbers for each configuration of the plane in the fleet and figured nobody would notice that the numbers were wrong. (They also couldn't be bothered to use commas consistently in their large numbers: The range was given as 3,515 with a comma, but the distance was given as 4481 without one.)

Oh, and after we landed, the in-flight entertainment system listed our distance to destination as 27 miles. I suspect it's calculating the distance to downtown Seattle instead of the distance to the airport.

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