

## Four in 10 British pilots have 'nodded off at the controls in mid-flight'

- **Four in five exhausted pilots would not declare themselves unfit to fly for fear of being stigmatised**

By [Allan Hall](#)

**PUBLISHED:** 00:55 GMT, 19 November 2012 | **UPDATED:** 00:57 GMT, 19 November 2012

A disturbing study among airline pilots has found that one-in-three have fallen asleep at the controls of jetliners carrying hundreds of passengers - and British pilots are among the most drowsy.

The European Cockpit Association (ECA), which represents pilots, published its chilling findings after surveys carried out by national unions, large numbers of pilots are half-asleep - or not even awake - while at the controls of a plane.

According to polls carried out in Austria, Sweden, Germany and Denmark, four out of five pilots have to cope with fatigue while in the cockpit.



Stigmatised: A survey found upto 80per cent of exhausted pilots would not declare themselves unfit. (Posed by models)

Even worse, between 43per cent and 54per cent of pilots surveyed in the United Kingdom, Norway and Sweden said they had already fallen asleep 'involuntarily' while flying - and a third of these pilots found their colleagues were also asleep when they woke up.

More than three out of five pilots in Sweden, Norway and Denmark reported making mistakes due to fatigue, while in Germany, this figure was four out of five.

Between 70per cent and 80per cent of exhausted pilots would not declare themselves unfit to fly for fear of being stigmatised by their employers or left facing disciplinary action.



Nodding off: A third of pilots who admitted to dozing off had woken to find their co-pilots asleep

More than 6,000 European pilots were surveyed for this study, between 2010 and 2012.

The ECA says the study shows that fatigue among pilots is a 'common, dangerous and under-reported phenomenon in Europe'.

The figures come a few weeks after the EASA re-launched its proposals for a review of rules on flight and duty times and rest requirements for pilots.

The ECA has criticised the proposals, saying that if the EU adopts them, air passenger security will be compromised.

Find this story at [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2235021/Four-10-British-pilots-nodded-controls-mid-flight.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2235021/Four-10-British-pilots-nodded-controls-mid-flight.html)

Published by Associated Newspapers Ltd

Part of the Daily Mail, The Mail on Sunday & Metro Media Group

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