

Comprehension of the hand baggage retrieval pictorial on the safety card

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Accident reports have indicated that passengers continue to retrieve their hand baggage during an emergency evacuation. The safety card provides information on a range of emergency procedures, including a pictorial to inform passengers not to retrieve hand baggage in the event of an evacuation. Previous research has indicated a lack of comprehension of some of the images on the safety card, although knowledge of the comprehension of the hand baggage pictorial is limited. One potential means of improving comprehension from research in the warnings domain is to embed the image within the procedures in which it is likely to be encountered – in this context embedding the *do not retrieve hand baggage* pictorial within the image that illustrates the evacuation procedures. The aim of this study was to assess the comprehensibility of the hand baggage retrieval pictorial and to investigate the effect of embedding it within the image of the evacuation procedures. Sixty participants performed a comprehension test of a safety card image - half the participants viewed an image where the hand baggage retrieval information was embedded within the evacuation procedures and half the participants viewed an image where the hand baggage pictorial was not embedded. Qualitative responses were then coded and used during the analysis.

The results revealed that when the pictorial was not embedded within the evacuation procedures, comprehension levels were low, however comprehension was significantly enhanced when the pictorial was embedded within the evacuation procedures. Adding to previous evidence on low comprehension of safety card pictorials, this study has highlighted a lack of comprehension of a pictorial typically used to convey information on not retrieving hand baggage during an evacuation. By making a relatively simple change through embedding the information within the procedures in which it is likely to be encountered, comprehension was improved as participants were able to put the pictorial into context. This principle has the potential to improve comprehension in other areas of safety information.