



Airport Customer Service Statements

Flight 1409 (DTW-EWR), MD-88 (Ship 9008), 1/24/2016

Victor Kennedy
Push Driver: ALA

24 Jan 2016

To whom it may concern,
On 24 Jan 2016 about 1700 I was towing aircraft Flt 271 from gate 53 to gate 42. The pushback crew consisted of myself, brake rider Andrew Shirley, wing walkers Keith Durrett, Juan Alcantara and Felipe Disla. When I entered Romeo Charlie entry way approaching gate 42, a Delta MD88 was blocking the gate area of gate 42. The MD88 proceeded to taxi behind the American Airlines gates. The port authority escort drove to gate 42 where my wing walkers were and asked could they guide me pass the MD88, with my wing walkers in place I proceeded to tow the aircraft to gate 42. Since I had come to a complete stop moving the aircraft forward was more difficult due to the slushy/icy conditions. That section of the ramp was not completely plowed. I proceeded to tow the aircraft to gate 42 following the instructions provided to me. When I parked the aircraft at the gate I was informed that the 767 I was towing had hit the MD88.

26 Jan 2016

To whom it may concern,
This is an addendum to my written statement that I submitted on 24 Jan 2016. As the pushback driver, the only communication I have is a hand held radio which monitors Delta operations and a headset radio which keeps me in contact with the brake rider in the flight deck.

Andrew Shirley
Brake Rider: EWR Operation Service Manager (OSM)

At around 1720 we started to reposition, I was the brake rider for DL271 A/C ship 1708 from B53 to B42 with an escort from the Port Authority. The frequency used to contact Port Authority Ground is 122.85. I stayed on that channel during the movement. During the repo, DL1409 was on the taxi way heading for the entry point RC towards gate 41. DL1185 was still at the gate, B41. DL1409 proceeded before us into RC then turn to the left behind the gates for US Airway / American. The port proceeded to escort us to B42. I noticed the wing walker on the left where DL1409 was, Felipe Disla giving the signal to proceed. Once the jet tug operator Victor Kennedy began to turn right heading into the gate I felt a gyration. I assumed it was the snow that caused the movement. It stopped about 5 seconds later as we pulled into gate 42. Juan Alcantara was in position to ground guide the jet tug where to stop. Keith Durrett was the wing walker of the right side. Once the reposition was over I set brakes and waited for the jet bridge operator Asif Zia to maneuver the jet bridge into position but it took longer than usual. About 2 minutes later operations called me on the radio and asked my position, I stated I was still on board and waiting for the jet bridge operator so I could deplane. I was informed then that DL1409 had been struck by DL271.

Felipe Disla
Left Wing Walker

On Sunday 1-24-15 I was part of the tow team that was bringing the plane from gate 53 to 42. ON this occasion the flight needed a port authority escort. So after the plane is in position by Romeo Delta the jet tug driver follows the PA escort onto the runway. Leaving the other agent and myself to head back to gate 42 to wait for the plane. While i was waiting for the plane to come to the gate i noticed DL flt 1409 ship#9008 enter Romeo Charlie headed towards gate 41b. But there was a plane already at the gate. So flt 1409 stop short of 41b right in front of gate 42. Flt 1409 proceeded to make a left turn towards terminal A. As he made the turn flt 1409 stopped on a angle facing the hardstand. That's when the PA escort escorting ship#1708 came over to us by gate 42. He told us to try and bring ship#1708 into gate 42 to place a wingwalker on the pilots side. That's when i indicated to the jet tug driver to move to the left. Then i proceeded to walk out towards the tail of the plane to get a visual. Everything was clear when he started to make the turn into gate 42 . But that's when i seen the winglet of ship#1708 get closer to the tail of ship#9008. When i seen the this i yelled and waived the stop signal at the jet tug driver. But i was to far out to keep visual with both aircrafts and the jet tug driver. He couldn't see me and that's when the accident happened.

Keith Durrett
Right Wing Walker

I was wingwalking
on the right side, Disla was
wingwalking on the left side.
Disla was Guiding the plane
in to Gate 42 when the
plane hit the other plane.
I didn't see the planes hit.

Juan Alcantara
Witness

On January 24th, 2015 I was assigned to delta flight # 0271-148 on gate 53, after the offload, approximately 1700, I was waiting for the aircraft to come over from gate 53 to gate 42. The team was towing the plane to gate. Keith Durrett, Felipe Disla and Victor Kennedy were towing the plane to gate when Port Authority came to gate 42 and told me that the 767 just clipped the wing of plane that was in the alleyway. At that moment I advised Asif about the situation and waited for the plane to come to the gate and notified the tow driver who was Mr Kennedy.

Nuno Gouveia
EWR Operation Service Manager (OSM)

Flight 1409 landed and was scheduled to go to gate 41. Unfortunately gate 41 had an aircraft that wasn't scheduled to leave until 1800 due to all departure runways being closed. Flight 1409 never called OPS for a gate assignment. When flight 1409 called he stated that he was at Remo Charlie and that he noticed that there was a plane at his assigned gate. I advised them that due to the snow and runway issue that EWR didn't have a gate available at this time. I advised him to call the tower and advise them that he would need to hold until a gate was available. A few minutes passed and I heard on the radio that flight 1409 notified the tower that he was struck by our 767 that was under tow from gate 53 to 42.