

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
Office of Aviation Safety
Washington, D.C. 20594

EMERGENCY RESPONSE GROUP
CHAIRMAN'S FACTUAL REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

A. ACCIDENT: DCA 97-MA-059

Operator: Fine Air Inc.
Aircraft: Douglas DC-8-61, N27UA
Location: Miami International Airport, Florida
Date: August 7, 1997
Time: 1236 Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)¹

B. AIRPORT GROUP

Group Chairman Lawrence D. Roman
Senior Investigator, Airports
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C.

Members: Charles V. Phillips
Airport Fire Chief
Metro-Dade Aviation Department

C. SUMMARY

On August 7, 1997, at about 1236, a Fine Air DC-8-63, N27UA, crashed after takeoff from runway 27R at Miami International Airport (MIA) and a fire ensued. Miami International Airport (MIA) Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) and Metro-Dade County emergency units responded. All three crew members and the the single passenger sustained fatal injuries. One person on the ground was also killed. The airplane was totally destroyed.

¹ All times herein are eastern daylight time (EDT) based on the 24 hour clock unless otherwise noted.

D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

1. Airport Information


MIA, elevation 11 feet MSL, is located approximately 8 miles northwest of the City of Miami. MIA is owned and operated by the Dade County, and it has a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approved emergency plan and is certificated as Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Index E² in accordance with 14 CFR 139. The last FAA annual airport certification inspection was in July, 1997, and the last full scale disaster drill was conducted in April, 1996.

MIA has three grooved asphalt runways ,with precision instrument markings: 9L/27R, 9R/27L, and 12/30. Runway 9L/27R is 10,502 feet long, 200 feet wide.

2. Emergency Response

At 1238, the MIA Airport Fire responded after visually observing the crash, and simultaneously receiving alert/alarm notifications from the MIA Air Traffic Control Tower, and the Metro-Dade County Communications Center. The initial response, which arrived about 2½ minutes after the alarm, consisted of 3 ARFF trucks, one suppression unit, and a Battalion Chief. An additional 10 suppression units, and 9 rescue units arrived later. A total of over 100 emergency response personnel were involved.

The MIA Fire Chief estimated that the fire was under control after 15 minutes, and was out after 30 minutes, however "flare-ups" continued for some time thereafter.


Lawrence D. Roman
Senior Investigator,
Airports

²Index E - FAA ARFF index for air carrier aircraft of at least 200 feet in length. 14 CFR 139 requires a minimum of 3 ARFF vehicles carrying an amount of water and the commensurate quantity of AFFF so that the total quantity of water for foam production carried by all three vehicles is at least 6000 gallons.