

CEN11IA234
N11187
Embraer 145 incident in Akron, Ohio
March 18, 2011

Telephone Interview of Flight Crewmembers

Persons present by telephone during the interview

Trey Ables - ExpressJet

Tom Leahy - FAA

Mike Shanks - ALPA

Erin Shields - ALPA representing pilots

Adam Huray – NTSB Systems Group Chairman

Grayson Cash - ASA

CAPTAIN INTERVIEW

The Captain, Mr. Jonathan Pettit, stated that he was the flying pilot and the flight was uneventful until the landing and that the approach was smooth with a visual approach backed up with ILS. The glideslope was captured about the outer marker. The landing was normal until nosewheel touchdown when the airplane made a fairly violent swerve to the left. He stated that he used a bracket to hold his approach plate book and that the bracket hooks in so that the approach plates can't interfere with anything. He stated that the last taxi turn was a 90 degree right turn in Chicago. He stated that he did not touch the tiller during the event landing and that procedures state to never touch the tiller. He again stated that when the NLG touched down the airplane immediately started turning left and that the first officer attempted to disengage the nosewheel steering. He said that there were no warnings or messages prior to the event starting and he didn't think that the nosewheel steering disengage worked. He estimated that it was about 3 seconds from NLG touchdown to being in the grass. When asked about the approach plate book he stated that the book slid off the bracket to the side and onto his lap. He tossed it out of the way and it landed on the flight bag behind and to the left of seat. At some point it may have been in the area of the tiller but was not on the tiller. It was clear of the tiller before the airplane left the runway. He said that the NWS disconnect was activated about 1 second after the airplane started to veer. When asked he stated that the spoilers deployed normally. In regard to thrust reversers, he said that they normally used reverse thrust during landing but he used asymmetric thrust to try to keep the airplane on the runway. He was asked if the steering felt normal during departure at Chicago to which he replied that everything was normal until the nose landing gear touched down at Akron. When asked if additional training would be helpful he said that he didn't think more training would have changed anything. When asked if the nosewheel steering wandered at Chicago the captain responded that he did not recall but that everything felt normal. He added that on long straight taxis he would take his hand off of the tiller and steer with the rudder pedals.

FIRST OFFICER INTERVIEW

The first officer, Mr. Harold Elmore, stated that the pilot put nose wheel down slowly and as soon as it touched down the airplane started to go left immediately. He then went on controls and applied hard right rudder then hard right brake then NWS disconnect several times. He commented that he usually hears a ding and master caution when activating NWS disengage but didn't recall hearing it during the event. He stated that as weight transferred to the nose landing gear the airplane went to left and as more weight came onto the nosewheel the veer became more pronounced. He stated that the nosewheel disengage switch has to be pulled in and you almost have to "dig" your finger in to activate. He stated that the last 1/8th or 1/6th of travel is when the switch activates. When asked, the first officer stated that he did not feel the nosewheel steering system disengage when on the runway. When asked if once the airplane entered grass if he thought the pitch attitude changed or was NLG at full extension he said that it could have, but can't recall. He thought they were sliding more sideways in the grass, but tracks showed straight. When asked "Do you think had full brake effectiveness?" He stated that he didn't feel pulsating like from anti-skid and thought there would be flat spots on tires but didn't see them the next day. When asked at what speed the controls were grabbed he said that his hands were not on the controls until he reached for the nosewheel disengagement switch. His hands were not on column when the swerve started. When asked "What speed do you normally get control from captain?" he responded that he would get control about 40 knots but that during the event, the Captain didn't let go of controls at all. The first officer also commented that they experienced mild windshear during the final approach.

FOLLOW UP QUESTION FOR CAPTAIN

- Captain, when do you release controls? Answer - Below 80 knots.
- Do you think the binder had touched the tiller? Answer - Can't say for sure. I think the binder fell after the swerve started.
- How long was the binder on your lap? Answer - A second or two at most.
- Where did book come to rest? Answer – behind the seat to left of the console, was out of the way and could not contact tiller.
- Do you remember wind speed at altitude - Answer - At 500-600 feet it was still 40 knots –