

The weather observer on duty at the Little Rock Airport-Adams Field at the accident time was interviewed in person on June 4, 1999. The following is a summary of that interview.

The weather observer had been a certified weather observer since August 1975. He worked at the Little Rock Flight Service Station from 1975 until 1992 when he retired from the Federal Aviation Administration. From 1992 to 1994 he worked as a weather observer at Jonesboro, AK. However, he returned to Little Rock in 1994 and has been a contract weather observer at Adams Field since then.

Small  
office  
AK

On the accident day he was scheduled to work from midnight to 0800 on June 2. He said he arrived at the observatory at approximately 2310. He said it was raining lightly when he arrived at the airport. The observer stated that it was his normal practice to arrive early for his shift to familiarize himself with the existing weather before assuming shift responsibility. The observer said that after he arrived he talked to the observer on duty for a few minutes and about 2330 walked outside to observe the current weather conditions. He stated that at approximately 2346-2347, he told the on duty observer that she could go depart and he would assume weather observing responsibility. This included taking the hourly observation which is disseminated at Little Rock at 53 minutes past the hour. He said that the ASOS visual and audio alerts for the hourly observation goes off at 47:20 but couldn't recall if the alerts had gone off before the previous observer had departed.

A discussion then took place which included both the weather observer and the manager of the contract weather office explaining to the interviewers the meaning of the alerts and the manner in which ASOS works for the hourly observations. They stated that ASOS starts processing for the hourly observation at 47:20. They said that from 47:20 to 53:20 the observer was able to edit the ASOS observation and add remarks to the observation but that it was not possible to transmit it until 53:20. They said it was normal practice to wait until near the end of the 6-minute period to edit the ASOS since the ASOS could change the entry before transmission if edited too soon. They stated that it was not possible for an observer to generate a special observation during that 6-minute period.

The observer was asked to recall his actions around the accident time. He said that at about 23:47:22 (at ASOS alert), he walked outside by the rain gauge and evaluated sky, visibility, and present weather conditions. Then he came back into the observatory to complete the observation. The observer said that he edited the ASOS observation and added remarks. He said he then logged into ASOS as the weather observer on duty. The observer said that the 0453Z observation accurately described the weather conditions at that time.

The ASOS edit log around the accident time was then reviewed with the observer. An entry at 22:47:22 cst (23:47:22 cdt) which began as AUTO SPCL OBS CANCELLED was discussed. The observer said he didn't remember seeing that observation.

A group discussion ensued and it was explained that since the special observation was generated during the hourly observation time period, the ASOS software canceled the observation in preparation for the hourly report. It was