

Docket No. SA-533

Exhibit No. 2-H

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Interview Summaries of Empire Airlines Dispatch Personnel

(8 Pages)

ATTACHMENT

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SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW


Person Interviewed: Dee Barnes
Dispatcher
Hayden, ID

Date of Interview: February 24, 2009 about 1400 PST.

Ms. Barnes was interviewed in person. The following is a summary of information she provided:

- In June of 2001, she started part time for Empire in dispatch. Empire paid for her dispatcher license training, and In August of 2001 she started the Academy Aviation Center's dispatcher course. Her first 4-weeks were by correspondence. She learned about meteorology and learned about Surface observations and prognostic charts and could read could read METARs and TAFs.
- Empire also provided training to her in weight and balance, basic indoctrination, and F27 systems during her first 6-months.
- When they received the ATR, an instructor from Flight Safety came to Hayden and Ray Stanea and Lorena Hanson received training on the ATR first, and then she and Dan Perich received theirs.
- She did receive an FCOM for the ATR, but did not receive the ATR be prepared for icing document.
- On the night of the accident, she was relieved by Ray Stanea at 2300 PST.
- She released the Alliance to Lubbock leg and then went to create the release for the Lubbock to Midland leg but, because of the weather in Midland, she told Ray Stanea that he would have to do the release.
- She also released the flight to go from Midland to El Paso. The flight was originally scheduled to go to Lubbock but the Caravans could not go to Lubbock as Lubbock was receiving freezing drizzle at the time. She advised the captain of the accident flight of the change of destination and discussed with him the reason why.
- The Caravans do not operate in freezing rain or freezing drizzle per FedEx.
- Their GOM allows them to operate in light freezing drizzle and light freezing rain.
- "It is ruled that ATR can handle a little bit more ice."
- Anytime a captain disagrees with a dispatcher he has the final say.
- She has recurrent training every year, both on-line and classroom.
- She does not know about SCDD or SLD.
- When she talked to the captain of the accident flight, he expressed no concern with the weather.
- They do not see "a lot of freezing drizzle." It is not something they see regularly, "with Caravans in the northwest, I would definitely notice it."
- She faxed the accident crew the flight plan and weather package.

- She was familiar with the Aircraft Deicing Program (ADP).
- She believed that as long as they met the requirements for ground deicing that they were good to go.
- She believed that that water droplet diameter information was "in the books" and that it was not something that they were required to memorize, and that the GOM gave guidance for in-flight hazards that were to be avoided.
- SIGMETS and PIREPS for things such as light freezing drizzle and light freezing rain, "does not mean that there is something significant out there."
- They use WSI. It does give PIREPS and they do include it in their briefing package.
- Their pilots do pass on PIREPS to FSS and ATC, etc.
- The release states the fuel on board and they do review the fuel prior to releasing the flights. They also review the fuel for the part 91 flights. They prepare the releases 2 to 4 hours prior to the flight, and then they review the releases 70 to 90 minutes prior the flight. They then update the release if needed and fax it to the crew.
- It is the same amount of workload for the dispatcher regardless if it is Part 91 or Part 121.
- There was nothing that she could think of that could have been done differently. She would have done the same things again when releasing the flight.



Todd G. Gunther
Air Safety Investigator

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW

Person Interviewed: Dan Perich
Manager of Dispatch
Hayden, ID

Date of Interview: February 24, 2009 about 0910 PST.

Mr. Perich was interviewed in person. The following is a summary of information he provided:

- Mr. Perich started in aviation in 1984. He was a navigator on B-52s in the Air Force for 9-years and then went into dispatching and crew scheduling for the Air Force. He started at Empire Airlines "a little over 16 years ago." He has been the Manager of Dispatch for 14 of the 16 years.
- He received his dispatchers "license," through ATI In Bloomington, Minnesota. It was a 6- week course. Part of his training was through correspondence with the school, and then he took both an oral and practical test. The oral testing was done by a senior dispatcher from Northwest Airlines.
- He held no other certificates or ratings.
- During training at Empire his dispatchers go to "Basic Indoc" with the pilots as well as learning "aircraft systems." They also learn through on the job training (OJT).
- They are "Part 121 Supplemental," and dispatchers are not required, However all of his flight followers with the exception of one new hire are licensed dispatchers, and the new hire if he works out, will be sent to school to become a dispatcher by Empire.
- His dispatchers have not gone through Dispatcher Resource Management (DRM) but they have gone through Crew Resource Management (CRM) with the pilots.
- He likes to hire dispatchers from the local area, as they seem to stay around longer.
- They also have their dispatchers jumpseat on the airplanes for familiarization purposes.
- They currently have 7 flight followers including himself and the new hire employee.
- They have staggered shifts.
- They prepare the flight releases on the previous shift. This includes calculating the fuel burns and planning for alternates. Approximately 1 to 1 hour and 30 minutes prior to the flight they recheck they weather to see if anything has changed.
- For their operations in Alaska they do flight releases for all of their flights, both Part 121 and Part 91.

- In the lower 48, Part 91 flights are not released. They do however send the pilots a weather package and file the flight plan for them.
- They do monitor the flights and if they see them "deviate significantly," they will make contact with the flight. They do not have Cell Call or ACARS. They will first try to contact them through ATC and then ARINC.
- They use "RLM Software Flight View," to track the flights.
- Because of the short stage lengths, the weather does not change that much. If they see something significant change with the weather they contact the flight if they are airborne and if they have not departed yet they will make contact with them on the ground.
- He believed that if he had to do a flight release on all of the companies flights (121, 135, and 91) that he would have to double his manning.
- When asked about freezing drizzle, he stated that he knew it was undesirable and that it tended to exist at this time of year.
- He stated that there was no restriction for flight into freezing drizzle or freezing rain in their operations manual regarding the ATR. There was one though for the Cessna 208 as "they're ice pigs." He also believed that freezing drizzle was below 50 microns.
- During training he did not receive the ATR "Prepare For Icing" publication.
- They do recurrent training annually. It is on-line and they do cover some meteorology as part of the ground deicing training that is included.
- Launching in light freezing drizzle and moderate freezing drizzle does not concern them. Attempting to launch in freezing rain does, because of the considerably reduced holdover times. The holdover times are a factor, and in a situation where the holdover times are reduced like that, they probably will not go.
- They will not dispatch the ATR into severe icing or the Caravans in anything over freezing fog and definitely would not launch the Caravans into freezing rain.
- In the event that dispatch has a concern they can override the pilot in command and can cancel or divert the flight.
- He did not know that there was a difference between ground icing and in-flight icing. If the airplanes were deiced they could go.
- They did check for in flight icing conditions on radar and that they were more concerned with the Caravan in icing enroute.
- He had seen the weather for the accident flight and no one was really concerned.
- "If we did not fly in freezing drizzle, we would never fly in the Pacific Northwest this time of year."
- Particular flights are not assigned to a particular dispatcher.
- It gets busy for dispatch between 0600-0900 and from 1630-1900. During those times, approximately 50 of their airplanes are airborne. Approximately 10 are Part 121 during that time, 30 are Part 135, and the rest are Part 91.
- They have 2 dispatchers on each of the normal shifts and one on the graveyard shift.
- 99% of the time the flight crew and dispatch agree and the dispatchers always err towards caution. Both the pilot and the dispatcher must agree and some

dispatchers have been "chewed on," because they refused to do something when they or the pilot were not comfortable.

- On the day of the accident because of the freezing drizzle the "Baron Aviation" CE208 could not go to LBB. We dispatched the accident airplane to ELP "based on freight" that went to ELP. "It had nothing to do with the weather."
- We are more cautious in Alaska.
- "We have seen nothing that would preclude us from launching into freezing drizzle."



Todd G. Gunther
Air Safety Investigator

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW


Person Interviewed: Ray Stanea
Dispatcher
Hayden, ID

Date of Interview: February 24, 2009 about 1110 PST.

Mr. Stanea was interviewed in person. The following is a summary of information he provided:

- He learned to be a dispatcher in Miami, Florida, at Sheffield School of Aeronautics.
- He was also a flight instructor.
- He was a dispatcher in Alaska between 1980 to 1982, he was a flight instructor from 1982 to 1989, and then went to work as a dispatcher for Empire.
- He is familiar with 14 CFR part 61, 91, and 121, along with dispatch procedures for domestic and flag operations as well as flight planning and navigation.
- He is a CFI, CFII, AGI, and holds a commercial pilot certificate with an instrument rating and rating for airplane single engine land. He has accrued 4,400 hours of flight time.
- He released the accident flight.
- He remembered that at the time there was some freezing fog and freezing drizzle.
- The airplane was "sitting" in Alliance for 3 hours when he went on duty.
- Empire had been operating the ATR for 4 to 5 years, and it was almost a year before they went on line.
- He had concerns at the time as the weather was down in Midland, as a result he was going to have them sit in Lubbock until it came up.
- The Caravan was not a good ice hauler so they would not send it in to freezing precipitation and they had a restriction in the GOM. The ATR however could operate in light freezing drizzle, light freezing rain, Freezing drizzle and freezing fog.
- Empire's library has books for both the 208 and the ATR including the FCOM for the ATR.
- When dispatching their first concern is whether or not they have a no go item and of course, the weather.
- When he spoke with the captain of the accident flight before the first flight of the trip, it was a "normal conversation" and he told him about releasing the flight only as far as Lubbock because of the weather in Midland.
- He believed that compared to other weather he had seen over the years, that the weather was not that bad.

- They used WSI electronic weather charts. He always looked at the SIGMETS and AIRMETS, but could not recall if there had been any.
- When he went through his initial training at Empire he received the same training the pilots did and for recurrent they would also do the on-line course that the pilots did which also contained some meteorology.
- He and some of the check airman also were trained on the ATR when the airplane came on-line. He believed that it was a 40-hour course. During the training "they" talked about problems with the de-ice boots.
- He did not recall if they discussed SCDD or SLD.
- He did not know the average micron size of the droplets.
- He had seen different icing conditions over the years and was aware of the holdover tables and had "concerns" anytime there were icing conditions.
- Anytime a pilot has expressed concerns over items he has backed up their concerns and decisions.
- He was the only one on duty that night and he had been doing releases for other flights that would launch during the 0600 to 0700 window when the accident flight departed.
- It was the only Empire flight airborne at that time.



Todd G. Gunther
Air Safety Investigator