Survey response to the FAA from a Part 135 operator in Juneau. This information was provided by the FAA to the NTSB in 2013.

2012 Operator Survey
OF
Aviation Weather Camera Efficiency Benefits Reply

The aviation weather cameras form the core of our weather related decisions. In Southeast Alaska forecasts and TAFS are educated guesses made by the National Weather Service (NWS). The NWS strives to provide us with a plethora of information. However due the topography and conflicting maritime and interior weather patterns this task is difficult.

The aviation weather cameras allow us to evaluate sections along our routes of flight in real time. The information provided by the cameras is critical to our decision to dispatch, delay, postpone or cancel a flight. When flights have not been dispatched due to weather the cameras become our sole means of determining our ability to conduct operations with the margin of safety that our passengers demand from our operation. Without the cameras we would rely on pilots reporting their observations during flights with passengers on board.

Case in point: North of Juneau is Berners Bay which is on our route to Haines and Skagway. Warm maritime air comes up Lynn Canal in the direction of Berners Bay. Cold glacier air drains out of the Juneau Ice field down into the mouth of Berners Bay. When these air masses collide, obscuration and precipitation are the norm. However there is almost no indication that this is occurring from NWS, metars, TAF's and Area Forecasts. The surface analysis charts do not depict this either due to their wide coverage.

The Berners Bay Aviation Weather Camera is our sole means to determine if this area is flyable. Before the Berners Bay camera installation I once attempted 4 separate Juneau to Haines flights in one day. Each flight had to be discontinued due to the above stated conditions in paragraph 3. The cost to our airline for these "reconnaissance" flights was over $2000.00 in one afternoon with no benefit to us in revenue.

Now we are able to view the aviation weather cameras and avoid this costly method of determining the weather in route. The aviation weather cameras save us time, money and potentially lives.

Thank you for your efforts to keep us safe and profitable. We look forward to each and every additional installation of your cameras and the information they provide.

Sincerely,

Assistant Director of Operations Seaport Airlines dba Wings of Alaska

David Williams:
[redacted]

2012 Operator Survey
Of
Aviation Weather Camera Efficiency Benefits

Purpose

This survey is intended to determine the number of preventable weather related in-flight disruptions your FAR Part 135 operation has experienced during the survey period of January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2012. This information will be used to extrapolate the amount of efficiency benefits Alaska aviation weather cameras have provided to your operation during the past 12 months of 2012 survey period. Thanks so much for your help!

Definitions

Weather related in-flight operational disruption: Preventable disruptions caused by either a lack of current weather information or the unreliability of current weather information that occurs after flight begins. Examples of situations that should be considered a disruption include:

A. Unscheduled return to the origin after experiencing weather

B. Diversion from the scheduled destination due to weather; i.e., unscheduled landing at an alternate destination, unscheduled over flight of the intended stop, etc.

C. Unplanned route deviation to avoid weather; i.e., using alternate routes after experiencing unknown/unexpected weather, landing to "wait out" the weather, etc.

Do not include disruptions that occur as a result of known/expected weather conditions; i.e., ground delays, rescheduled routes, planned changes in destination, etc.

Flight segments: Any flight between an origin and destination. However, flight seeing operations that include a landing, but return to place of origin should be considered a single flight segment.

Survey: Seaport Airlines dba Wings of Alaska

1. Approximately, how many flight segments do you operate annually?

15,000-17,000

2. Approximately, what percentage of flight segments experienced preventable weather related in-flight disruptions? 15 %.

3. What is the approximate average number of hours of disruption per flight segment? 1/hours

4. Have the amount of operational disruptions increased or decreased with the availability of Alaska aviation camera images? Decreased

5. Approximate percentage of Increase or Decrease

6. What was the number of flights that were rescheduled or postponed as a direct result of the camera service? 12%

7. What number of flights was cancelled due to the direct result of the camera service?

10%