

Survival Factual Report – Attachment 10
Interview Summary- Kiara Martinez, NYONair CX

SURVIVAL FACTORS

ERA18MA099

Interviewee: Kiara Martinez, FlyNYON Customer Service Representative
Date / Time: July 9, 2018 (1200 EST)
Location: Via telephone
Present: Emily Gibson (NTSB), Amanda Taylor (FAA), Ethan Fang (NYONair)
Representative: Diana Gurfel Shapiro, Condon & Forsyth LLP

Ms. Martinez had been employed with NYONair since August 2017 as a customer service representative (CX). She reported to the general manager or the assistant general manager, she was unsure which. Her job responsibilities included welcoming and checking passengers in as they arrived. She assisted in filling out the waiver forms. She also provided a colored wrist band assigned to a specific flight. She would take a picture of passenger's ID, offer coffee or water, talk, and attempt to get to know the passengers. Once it was time for the safety briefing, she gathered the passengers and "got them ready to be briefed." The day of the accident was a very busy day and she had worked 10-12 flights, but that was normal.

She checked in the passengers from the accident flight and made sure they completed the waiver. She took a picture of their ID and weighed them. She said she spoke to all the passengers and they were excited for the flight. There was nothing unusual about her conversations with them. Safety briefings started on the hour. FlyNYON recommended the passengers be at the terminal an hour and fifteen minutes before the flight for the check in process, then they were taken to the safety briefing video. The accident flight briefing started on time. When asked if any of the passengers in the group had any questions or comments about the safety briefing video she stated "no, they had no questions." When asked if she thought the passengers understood what was stated in the safety briefing, she stated "yes, they understood." She stated that one of the passengers was Spanish and spoke very little English. Ms. Martinez also spoke Spanish and did a lot of translating for her.

Ms. Martinez stated there were multiple groups of passengers in the safety briefing, not just the accident flight. There was another CX in the room with them, but she could not remember who. None of the other passengers had any questions or concerns. None were concerned about the weather. Before they leave the briefing room, she said she always asked if they had any questions and reiterated the items in the safety briefing.

They went to the harness room to be fitted into the harnesses. The CXs went over the harness and made sure the passengers fully understood the loading process. They made sure nothing was in the passengers' pockets and put all their belongings in a bin. They would then double check again. The CXs explained exactly what they were doing when they were harnessing the passengers. She explained to them that they have a cutter on the left side of the harness and told them that it was there in case of an emergency. She stated she would always review the information with the passengers and ask, "what is the cutter there for?" She said all of the accident passengers knew they had a cutter and they all knew how to use the cutter in case of an emergency. When asked if she specifically remembered going over all those details with the passengers on the accident flight, she stated, "yes, yes." When asked to confirm the cutter was on the left side of all the harnesses she replied, "yes." She also stated that all the harnessing was done at the terminal.

Before they loaded the passengers into the vans to take them to the heliport, she stated she would check with Operations to ensure they were ok to head out. Once Operations gave them the ok, they

took the passengers to the van. She said they made sure they put their seatbelts on and gave them another safety briefing in the van on the way to the heliport. When they arrived, they were introduced to the pilot. The pilot gave another safety briefing and they double checked the harnesses again. She could not recall what items were included in the pilot's safety briefing.

There were 3 separate groups, but she was assigned to the accident passengers. The pilot was in charge of loading and tethering them into the helicopter and she did not physically put the accident group into the helicopter. There was no particular order that the passengers were loaded. They typically did the one side and then the other but there was no specific order to load the passengers.

When asked how the pilot knew who was supposed to sit where, she stated that the CXs provided a flight sheet to the pilot. The flight sheet had the flight seating and the points of interest. When asked what her responsibilities were in the loading process, she stated that she made sure that passengers were fully secure and that they had their seatbelts on correctly and that there was "nothing hanging out." She also stated that because there was a Spanish-speaking passenger she made sure she reiterated everything in Spanish. The pilot gave a safety briefing and she repeated the briefing in Spanish.

When asked to clarify if the pilot briefing was given outside or inside the helicopter, she stated it was given inside the helicopter once everyone was loaded and confirmed that happened on the accident flight. She stated another person named "T", a loader employed by Liberty Helicopters, helped the pilot with the seatbelts and tethers.¹ She said she was just there as an "additional set of eyes" to make sure everything was fine.

When asked if she remembered what information the pilot included in his briefing inside the helicopter, she stated he briefed them on the harnesses and made sure they knew where the cutter was located. She stated he checked their gear to make sure it was secure. He told them how windy it would get up in the air asked them what they wanted to see. When asked if the passengers were dressed appropriately for the flight, she stated the men were wearing hoodies and the girl had on a jacket. She stated it was cold, but she thought they were properly dressed for the weather.

When asked to confirm whether some of the passengers on the accident flight had originally booked a 15 -minute flight she stated they were originally on an "experience flight" which was 15 minutes but upgraded to a 30-minute flight prior to the flight. When asked if that was something that all passengers have the option to do, she stated that it was something that they offered after the safety briefing video. They offered an upgraded flight and other upgrade packages including video and picture packages.

When asked if she remembered any interaction or conversations with the accident passengers, she stated she interacted with the Spanish speaking passenger quite a bit because she was translating. She also remembered interacting with the others but could not recall any specific conversations. She tried to get to know passengers on a personal level and tried to establish a relationship with them to make them feel comfortable while flying. She remembered one of the men was a journalist

¹ She did not know "T's" real name.

and he was excited to fly. He was going to create a blog about his experience. She said his friend was a firefighter. She said they were very excited and taking pictures and video.

When asked about her job responsibilities and training as a CX she stated that she had gone through “certification training.” She could not elaborate on the length of the training nor could she provide any specifics on the training. She stated the certification training included “being trained through the entire process.” She defined the “entire process” as the check in process (waivers, IDs, weight checks), the safety briefing, the harnessing, ramp training, loading, and unloading. She said all CXs were certified by the company managers. She stated that even though the pilots were to load the passengers, the CXs were still trained on how to load them as well.

When asked if she had receiving any training on interacting with intoxicated passengers she stated “no,” but she said she would be able tell if someone was intoxicated because of the check-in process. She stated they had never had anyone arrive intoxicated. When asked if she was ever faced with a passenger who had been drinking at the terminal, she stated no but if that occurred, she would go to upper management and let them handle it.

When asked what the difference was between the blue and yellow harnesses, she stated that the yellow harness buckled at the chest and blue harness buckled by the legs. She also stated the blue harness straps could make it tighter. She stated she had used both and that there was no protocol on when to use one over the other. She stated she had used both on herself before and felt safe in both. She stated she had flown on these flights at least 10 times. When asked about the tethers she stated they stayed with the helicopter. They were already installed before passengers arrived. When asked if there was anything else that she would like to share she said “no.”