

United Airlines Flight 1404 Incident

On April 18, 2007, about 0625, United Airlines flight 1404, an Airbus A320, taxied onto a closed runway at Miami International Airport (MIA), Miami, Florida, and began its takeoff roll. Night VMC prevailed at the time. A NOTAM indicated that runway 9/27 was closed from 2300 on April 17 to 1000 on April 18; the NOTAM was included in the flight release paperwork. The runway closure was also included in the ATIS information broadcast.

The flight crewmembers reported that they had the airport charts out and available. The controller told the flight crew to taxi the airplane to runway 30. The captain stated that he observed taxiway S almost directly opposite from the airplane's position and chose to make a left turn from taxiway S onto taxiway Q. This parallel taxi route placed the airplane adjacent to runway 30, the assigned runway for takeoff. The captain stated that, as the airplane passed the intersection with taxiway T, he verified that the runway sign was for runway 30. The first officer stated that, during this time, he was busy with flight paperwork and was accomplishing flight control checks.

Taxiway Q made a slight bend to the left after the intersection with taxiway T so that the taxiway was parallel with runway 27. The captain stated that he saw a runway, which he believed to be runway 30, when he looked to the right.

The first officer called the tower and advised that the airplane was ready to depart on runway 30. The controller cleared the airplane for takeoff from runway 30 while the airplane was still on taxiway Q. The first officer acknowledged the clearance for takeoff but did not state the runway number for the departure. The captain stated that, as the airplane neared the end of taxiway Q, he observed the hold short line and that, because the airplane was cleared for takeoff, he chose to turn directly onto the runway without stopping and transfer control of the airplane to the first officer. The first officer stated that his heading display was rotating to the right and in the correct direction to line up with the runway, which was still located to the right.

The first officer stated that he advanced the throttles, and, just before they reached the cruise thrust position, the airplane's nose wheel light illuminated a truck flashing its lights on the right side of the runway. The captain and the first officer stated that they observed the truck at the same time. Simultaneously, the controller was querying the flight crew to determine whether the airplane was on runway 30. The first officer rejected the takeoff, and the captain assumed control of the airplane.

Ramp personnel called the tower to advise that an airplane was on a closed runway, and the controller acknowledged this information. The controller subsequently advised the crew to use caution for workers and equipment on runway 27 and instructed the flight crew to taxi the airplane to runway 30. The airplane then took off to its destination airport—Dulles International Airport, Chantilly, Virginia—without further incident.

The pilots reported that the runway 27 edge lights were on. However, an airport engineer who witnessed the incident stated that he immediately scanned runway 27 after the event and noted that the runway edge lights were off.

Statement Regarding United Airlines Flight 1404 (MIA-IAD)
April 18, 2007

I was the Pilot in Command for United Airlines Flight 1404 (MIA-IAD) of April 18, 2007. We pushed back from the F gates and were cleared to taxi to Runway 30. I proceeded to taxi via Taxiway Q. At 0620, we were cleared for takeoff on Runway 30 with a 305 heading. At the time of the clearance we were taxiing parallel to rwy 30 near Q1. At Q8 I turned the aircraft right and the first officer took positive control for a rolling takeoff and he initiated the takeoff roll on runway 27. To reach Runway 30 we needed to cross the Runway 27 threshold and then turn right. The First Officer started to add power and then reduced power before I took control of throttles when both noticed a yellow truck and flashing yellow lights close to the right side of Runway. We also received calls from tower stating that the aircraft was on Runway 27. I took positive control and stopped the jet on the Runway 27 threshold at beginning line of Runway 30. Clearance was then given to taxi off Runway 27 at T5. We taxied to Runway 30 and had an uneventful takeoff.

I believe several factors contributed to lining up on Runway 27:

*Darkness

*Early takeoff clearance leading to rolling takeoff

*Short taxi leading to compressed pace

*Runway lights on and clear Runway 27

*There was no lighted X at the end of Runway 27 to indicate that it was closed

*Close alignment and crossing runways

*Q8 is lead in for both Runways

*I viewed Runway 30 several times while taxiing abeam/parallel on Taxiway Q which lead me to believe I was turning on to Runway 30 when making the right turn onto the Runway

* No other aircraft proceeding us to Runway 30

*I was my first time to takeoff on Runway 30 – I had previously only taken off from Runway 27

/s/ Steven Rands

Captain Steven Rands

Statement Regarding United Airlines Flight 1404 (MIA-IAD)
April 18, 2007

Taxiing out from the F gates in Miami, ground control cleared us to taxi to Runway 30. The Captain chose to taxi via Taxiway Q, paralleling runway 30. As we approached the hold short line for runway 27/30, tower cleared us for takeoff with a heading of 305 degrees. The Captain initiated the turn onto Runway 27 and transferred control of the aircraft to me and said take it on the roll. I pushed up the throttles while in the turn. I crosschecked the runway on the navigation display and noted that it wasn't aligned with the aircraft but realized that I was still in a turn to line up and dismissed that information. Before the throttles reached the climb detent, we noticed men and equipment with flashing yellow lights on the side of the runway. Simultaneously, tower called telling us that we were on Runway 27. I immediately pulled the power back to idle and the Captain took control, bringing the airplane to a stop. Speed didn't exceed more than a fast run and we stopped the aircraft prior to reaching the Runway 27/30 intersection. Tower then cleared us to taxi off of Runway 27 at Taxiway T5. We followed his instructions and continued back to Runway 30. We were cleared for takeoff and departed normally.

I believe that there were a number of factors that contributed to this incident:

- It was dark outside
- Runway 27 and 30 both start at taxiway Q
- Takeoff was rolling, I accepted transfer of control on the roll
- Short Taxi
- Runway lights on for 27
- Runway 27 was closed but lighted X not placed on runway
- Taxiway Q parallels runway 30. As we taxied out we noted that runway 30 was immediately to our right so we both subconsciously noted that and turned hard right onto the runway when cleared for takeoff.

/s/ Dave Digman

First Officer Dave Digman



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
PERSONNEL STATEMENT

1. NAME OF REPORTING FACILITY

MIA

2. REPORT NUMBER

P-50-T-MIA-07-006

3. AIRCRAFT IDENTIFICATION AND TYPE

United 1404 A320

4. LOCATION OF ACCIDENT/INCIDENT

MIA RY27

5. DATE/TIME OF ACCIDENT (INCIDENT UTC)

4-18-07 / 1024Z (1041/8/07)

6. EQUIPMENT ATTACHMENT

YES NO

7. NAME (OPERATING INITIALS)

Howard David (HX)

8. TITLE

ATCS

9. POSITION AND TIME (UTC)

LCN/S 1024Z-1108Z

10. COMPLETE IN ACCORDANCE WITH FAA ORDER 8020.16, AIR TRAFFIC ORGANIZATION, AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT NOTIFICATION, INVESTIGATION, AND REPORTING, PARAGRAPH 91, FAA FORM 8020-26, PERSONNEL STATEMENTS. THE PURPOSE OF THIS STATEMENT IS TO PROVIDE ANY FACTS WITHIN YOUR PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE THAT WILL PROVIDE A COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THIS ACCIDENT/INCIDENT. SPECULATIONS, HEARSAY, OPINIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND/OR OTHER EXTRANEIOUS DATA ARE NOT TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS STATEMENT. THIS STATEMENT MAY BE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT OR LITIGATION ACTIVITIES INCLUDING PRETRIAL DISCOVERY, DEPOSITIONS, AND ACTUAL COURT TESTIMONY. THIS STATEMENT IS TO BE HAND PRINTED AND SIGNED BY YOU, AND YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW CERTIFIES THE ACCURACY OF THIS STATEMENT. IT WILL NEITHER BE EDITED NOR TYPED AND, ONCE SIGNED, WILL CONSTITUTE YOUR ORIGINAL STATEMENT.

11. TEXT OF STATEMENT

ORIGINAL

SUPPLEMENTAL

I cleared United 1404 for takeoff on runway 30. When it appeared that United 1404 was lining up on ~~the~~ ^{4/18/07} runway 27 and moving forward, I asked United 1404 if he was on the correct runway. United 1404 replied that he was at taxi speed. I instructed United 1404 to use caution for men and equipment and to taxi off the runway via the first available taxiway on the ~~right~~ ^{4/18/07} right.

I certify that this is a true and correct statement to the best of my knowledge. I reserve the right change this statement.

12. SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

(R)

13. DATE OF SIGNATURE

4-18-07



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
PERSONNEL STATEMENT

1. NAME OF REPORTING FACILITY
 MIA

2. REPORT NUMBER
 P-50-T-MIA-07-006

3. AIRCRAFT IDENTIFICATION AND TYPE
 UAL1404 A320

4. LOCATION OF ACCIDENT/INCIDENT
 MIA RY 27

5. DATE/TIME OF ACCIDENT/INCIDENT (UTC)
 4/18/07 1025Z

6. EQUIPMENT ATTACHMENT
 YES NO

7. NAME (OPERATING INITIALS)

(JA) ANDREW SIKORA

8. TITLE

FLM

9. POSITION AND TIME (UTC)
 SM 4/18/07 0925-1040Z

10. COMPLETE IN ACCORDANCE WITH FAA ORDER 8020.16, AIR TRAFFIC ORGANIZATION, AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT NOTIFICATION, INVESTIGATION, AND REPORTING, PARAGRAPH 91, FAA FORM 8020-26, PERSONNEL STATEMENTS. THE PURPOSE OF THIS STATEMENT IS TO PROVIDE ANY FACTS WITHIN YOUR PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE THAT WILL PROVIDE A COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THIS ACCIDENT/INCIDENT. SPECULATIONS, HEARSAY, OPINIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND/OR OTHER EXTRANEOUS DATA ARE NOT TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS STATEMENT. THIS STATEMENT MAY BE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT OR LITIGATION ACTIVITIES INCLUDING PRETRIAL DISCOVERY, DEPOSITIONS, AND ACTUAL COURT TESTIMONY. THIS STATEMENT IS TO BE HAND PRINTED AND SIGNED BY YOU, AND YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW CERTIFIES THE ACCURACY OF THIS STATEMENT. IT WILL NEITHER BE EDITED NOR TYPED AND, ONCE SIGNED, WILL CONSTITUTE YOUR ORIGINAL STATEMENT.

11. TEXT OF STATEMENT

ORIGINAL

SUPPLEMENTAL

SPOKE WITH PILOT OF UAL1404 ON PHONE. HE ADVISED THAT THEY WERE TAXIING TO RY 30. THEY TURNED ON TO RY 27, DOING CHECKLISTS AND READING AIRCRAFT FOR T/O. COPILOT STILL THROTTLE CONTROL. AIRCRAFT ROLLED THRU RY 30 INTERSECTION SAW NO RUNWAY LIGHTS AND STOPPED. THE CAPTAIN HAD NOT TAKEN THROTTLE CONTROL YET WHEN THEY NOTICED NO RY LIGHTS AND THAT SOMETHING WAS WRONG. THEY STOPPED ON RY 27 JUST PAST RY 30 INTERSECTION. RY 27 HAD NO RUNWAY LIGHTS ON AND HAD NO LIT X ON RUNWAY DENOTING CLOSED RY TO PILOT

12. SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

(R)

13. DATE OF SIGNATURE

4/17/07

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION PERSONNEL STATEMENT		1. NAME OF REPORTING FACILITY MIA	2. REPORT NUMBER P-50-T-11A-07-006
4. LOCATION OF ACCIDENT/INCIDENT MIA RY 27		3. AIRCRAFT IDENTIFICATION AND TYPE UAL 1404 A320	
5. DATE/TIME OF ACCIDENT/INCIDENT (UTC) 4/18/07 1025 UTC		6. EQUIPMENT ATTACHMENT <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
7. NAME (OPERATING/INITIALS) Kaiwan Safavi		8. TITLE Resident Engineer	
9. POSITION AND TIME (UTC) S. of 9-27, by: 7 G.S./10:30			
10. COMPLETE IN ACCORDANCE WITH FAA ORDER 8020.16, AIR TRAFFIC ORGANIZATION, AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT NOTIFICATION, INVESTIGATION, AND REPORTING, PARAGRAPH 91, FAA FORM 8020-26, PERSONNEL STATEMENTS. THE PURPOSE OF THIS STATEMENT IS TO PROVIDE ANY FACTS WITHIN YOUR PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE THAT WILL PROVIDE A COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THIS ACCIDENT/INCIDENT. SPECULATIONS, HEARSAY, OPINIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND/OR OTHER EXTRANEOUS DATA ARE NOT TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS STATEMENT. THIS STATEMENT MAY BE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT OR INVESTIGATION ACTIVITIES INCLUDING PRETRIAL DISCOVERY, DEPOSITIONS, AND ACTUAL COURT TESTIMONY. THIS STATEMENT IS TO BE HAND PRINTED AND SIGNED BY YOU, AND YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW CERTIFIES THE ACCURACY OF THIS STATEMENT. IT WILL NEITHER BE EDITED NOR TYPED AND, ONCE SIGNED, WILL CONSTITUTE YOUR ORIGINAL STATEMENT.			
11. TEXT OF STATEMENT		ORIGINAL SUPPLEMENTAL	
<p>Operations on the Runway were officially closed at 11:00 PM (EST) April 17, 2007 and were not scheduled to resume till 10:00 AM (EST) April 18, 2007. At around 6:30 AM I noticed that a Ted Airlines, Airbus A320, had positioned itself^{it} itself for takeoff at the approach end of Runway 9-27. A short while after positioning itself on the runway, I noticed the plane applied power to its engines and then tax off the runway. It is at this moment that it occurred to me the plane should not have been there and I immediately conducted a visual scan of the runway. I subsequently observed that the lights to Runway 9-27 had indeed been turned off and that Ramp 1 had one of their vehicles on the North side of the runway, with their yellow/amber lights visibly flashing.</p> <p>The plane then exited Runway 9-27 and attempted to turn around and proceed in the direction of Runway 12-30.</p>			
OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-90)			
FAX TRANSMITTAL		# of pages = 1	
To Pam Teasley		From Det 3 - MIA	
Dept./Agency		Phone #	
Fax # (R)		Fax #	
NSN 7540-01-317-7368		5099-101 GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION	
12. SIGNATURE OF WITNESS (R)		13. DATE OF SIGNATURE 4/23/07	

UAL1404/MIA ATCT Partial Transcript
Runway Incident on April 18,2007 at 1025 UTC

UAL1404 Good Morning Ground, UAL104 leaving the alley with "LIMA"

MIA GC UAL1404 MIA ground, taxi to runway 30.

UAL1404 Tower, UAL1404 is ready thirty.

MIA LC UAL1404, runway 30, fly heading 305, cleared for takeoff.

UAL1404 Fly 305 heading, cleared for takeoff, UAL1404.

MIA LC UAL are you on runway 30? UAL1404 are you on runway 30?

MIA LC UAL1404 you are (not understandable)

UAL1404 UAL304, we are just ah, will call it just taxiing up here a little bit.

MIA LC Roger.

MIA LC Use caution for the men and equipment on the runway.

Ramp 36 Tower, Ramp 36.

MIA LC Ramp 36, Tower.

Ramp 36 Yeah, we got an aircraft on a closed runway TED.

MIA LC Affirmative, he is taxiing off.

MIA LC UAL1404, use caution for men and equipment on runway, taxi off.

MIA LC UAL1404, tower

UAL1404 (garbled)

MIA LC Okay, are you able to pull forward or no?

UAL1404 Affirmative

MIA LC Roger, pull forward, first right turn join taxiway tango.

UAL1404 Pull forward, first right turn join taxiway tango, UAL1404.

UAL1404/MIA ATIS "MIKE"
Runway Incident on April 18,2007 at 1025 UTC

Miami International Airport information "Mike," 0953 Zulu, wind 290 at 3, visibility 10 statute miles, few clouds 25, 000 feet, temperature 6, dew point 3 altimeter 2979. Approaches are being conducted to parallel, converge and intersecting runways. Arrivals expected an ILS 26L, ILS Runway 30, and LOC-DME Runway 26R approaches. All departures will be assigned departure heading and vectors to join a SID. Departing runway 26L, runway 26R and 30. Notice to Airman: Runway 9/27 closed. Taxi into position and hold operations are not authorized. Wind shear and Microburst information not available for arriving and departure runways. Bird activity in vicinity of the airport. Read back all hold short instructions. Advise on initial contact you have information "Mike."

AIRPORT DIAGRAM

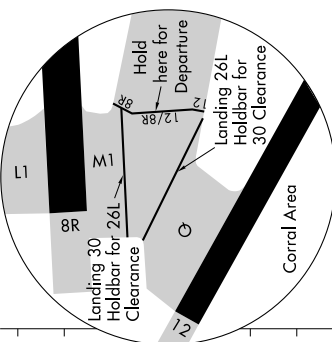
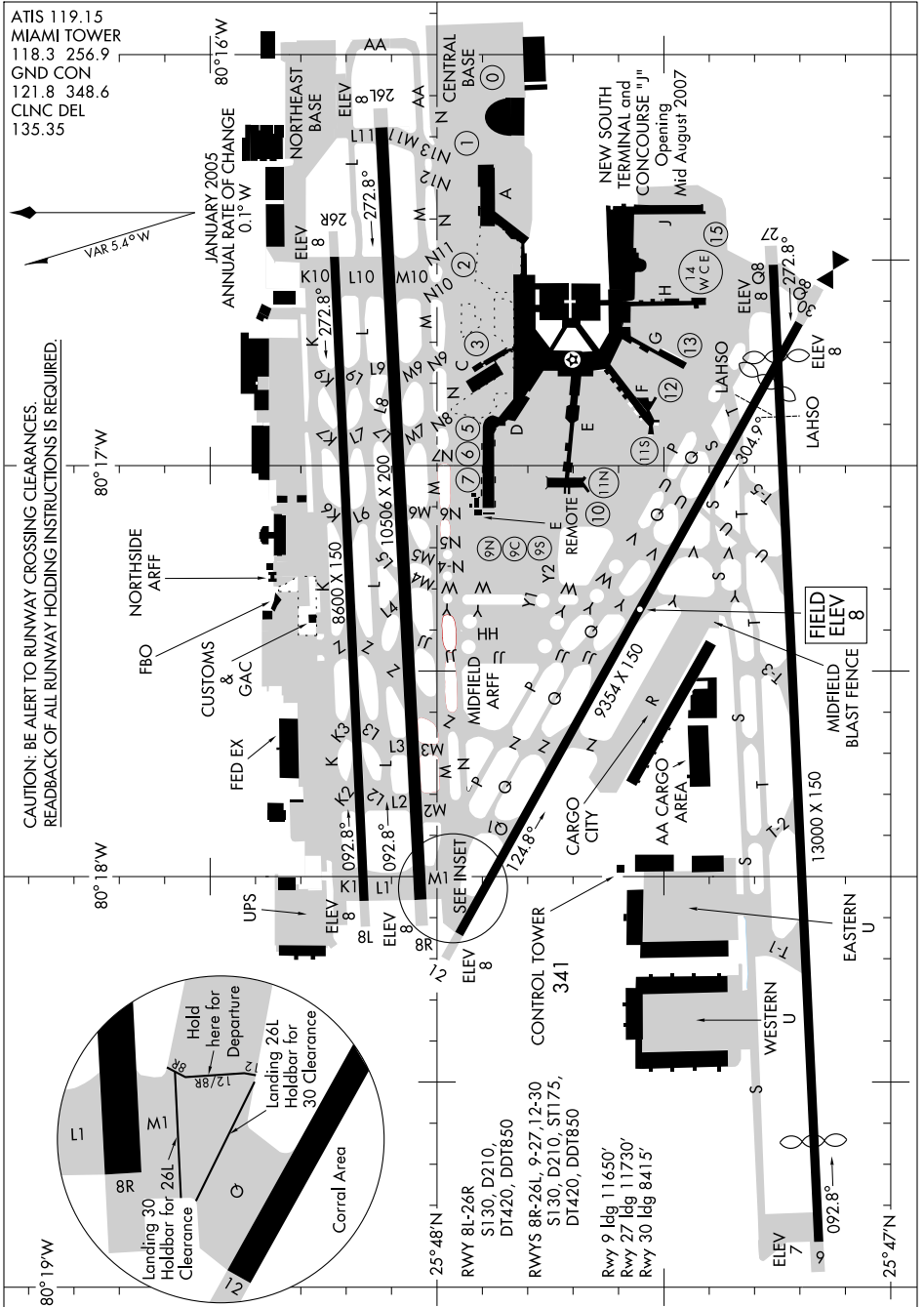
AL-257 (FAA)

MIAMI INTL (MIA)
MIAMI, FLORIDA

ATIS 119.15
MIAMI TOWER
118.3 256.9
GND CON
121.8 348.6
CLNC DEL
135.35

SE-3, 05 JUL 2007 to 02 AUG 2007

CAUTION: BE ALERT TO RUNWAY CROSSING CLEARANCES.
READBACK OF ALL RUNWAY HOLDING INSTRUCTIONS IS REQUIRED.



AIRPORT DIAGRAM

MIAMI, FLORIDA
MIAMI INTL (MIA)

SE-3, 05 JUL 2007 to 02 AUG 2007