

Factual Report – Attachment 2

Record of Conversation

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

DCA20MA059



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Date: January 29, 2020
Time: About 1130 and 1215 Pacific daylight time
Location: Van Nuys (VNY) Air Traffic Control Tower
Person Contacted: Mr. Chris Bellmas, Air Traffic Controller at VNY
Mr. Donald Lewis, Air Traffic Controller at VNY
Subject: Accident Investigation DCA20MA059

On January 29, 2020, at approximately 1130 Pacific standard time (PST), Mr. Mike Richards of the National Transportation Safety Board had a conversation with Mr. Chris Bellmas. During the conversation Mr. Bellmas reported the following:

During the morning of the accident he was in the tower cab as a Controller In Charge and ground controller. He recalled that the ceilings were smooth and there were solid ceilings all morning. Usually at VNY haze will build from the south and move to the north. At about :45 past each hour a display in VNY tower will beep and this means that a weather observation is ready to be reviewed by a LAWRS controller. Once the LAWRS controller augments (as needed) they will transmit the observation. After this the ATIS display will beep and the LAWRS controller will verify that the ATIS is correct and update the ATIS. Then the LAWRS controller will go to the FDIO and type up the weather observation and disseminate it. PIREPs go in the AIS-R. There are two anemometers at VNY, one is the ASOS and there is also an SWS. He believed the SWS is located near the ASOS but was not certain. The SWS is used for wind checks and altimeter information. When asked what wind information is used when trying to determine whether to turn the airport around, he stated that the SWS, the windsock and flight crew reports are used.

On January 29, 2020, at approximately 1215 PST, Mr. Mike Richards of the National Transportation Safety Board had a conversation with Mr. Donald Lewis. During the conversation Mr. Lewis reported the following:

On the morning of the accident he was in the tower cab at VNY. VNY was reporting IFR conditions. The visibility was low. He did not recall whether the ceilings were smooth or if the ceilings were at the same height in all quadrants.

The following images were captured from the VNY air traffic control tower about 1140 PST on January 29, 2020, presenting the view from the tower during a high visibility day. The first image is looking generally to the south, with each subsequent picture capturing the view from the tower rotating counterclockwise (south → east → north → west → south).







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Mike Richards
Aviation Safety Investigator - Senior Meteorologist
Operational Factors Division
National Transportation Safety Board