



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

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Date: June 29, 2024
Person Contacted: Danny Weizman – Flight School Owner
NTSB Accident Number: ERA23FA137 Farmingdale, New York

Narrative:

Mr. Weizman was the owner/operator of the accident airplane and the flight school that advertised and conducted the “discovery flight” which ended in the accident.

-How long did Mr. Chowdhury work for you? “Since November of 2022.” Do you have a resume? Mr. Weizman has an admin who can “dig up a resume” for the accident pilot. He added,

“CFIs are independent contractors Each instructor is a flight school in itself. Each student follows a lesson plan. They buy a kit from Gleim.” Mr. Weizman’s flight school had no SOPs.

-What was the purpose of the accident flight?

“We advertise on Groupon for introduction flights to open a window into aviation and try to get people interested. We don’t even break even on the flights.” Mr. Waizman suggested that 3-5 percent of these flights result in new students. He said he pushes for 3 lessons because if you take 3 lessons “you’re hooked.”

-Is there a lesson plan or standard list of subject areas covered during an introductory flight?

“It’s basically what I ask them to do: climbs, descents, and turns. Climb to 2,500, go southwest Crabtree Bridge near Fire Island.”

-What is a typical duration and route of a flight like this?

“Introductory flights are 35-45 minutes. 15-30 minutes on the ground first. Getting in the airplane, checklist, fly to practice area.”

-Are intro flight customers permitted to bring a second person on their introductory flight? “Yes”

-Do you encourage a customer to bring a friend?

“No. But on Groupon we do. Then we will fly one, switch out, then let the other.”

On the school’s website, it states, “GET FOR YOUR LOVED ONES AN ADVENTUROUS FLIGHT OVER THE SOUTHERN OR NORTHERN COAST OF LONG ISLAND. YOU CAN BE ALSO PART OF HIS/HER FIRST EXPERIENCE AS A PASSENGER AT THE BACK SEAT”

Are your aircraft equipped with fire extinguishers?

“As far as I know, all of them have fire extinguishers.”

-Are your aircraft equipped with life preservers?

“We operate at 2,500 feet and make sure we are within gliding distance from shore.”

-How are aircraft squawks (Faults/Discrepancies) recorded?

“If you have a maintenance issue you ground the plane and then your report it to the mechanic and to the office. The airplane is announced as grounded. The logbook can accept write-ups.”

Mr. Waizman explained that the “red binder” assigned to each airplane would be placed in a drawer by the office manager, removing the book and the airplane from circulation. The write-ups could be entered in the book directly or with a post-it note.

- What is the procedure for returning aircraft to service following a mx squawk?

“Only the officer manager and mechanic are allowed to go into drawer for logbook of grounded airplane. The mechanic has to put the entry to say the airplane has been fixed. The mechanic just writes up the repair as he sees fit, and states the airplane is returned to service.”

- Are pilots/CFIs encouraged to report safety issues?

“Yes. We have stickers they can put in the folder. There is a daily sheet for instructors to record time-in, time out, and safety issues.”

Do you keep the daily sheets? “Yes. I have to keep them for 5 years and some for 3.”

What is the process for doing so? “They report to us. We report to the mechanic.”

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-Is there typically a camera onboard the aircraft during an intro flight? “Sometimes, we use the GoPro, and they [the customers] get the sim card when we are done.”

-Describe the safety culture at the flight school. “I’m trying to make it 100%. We have no safety officer. The mechanic is basically [the safety officer]. It’s a small operation.”

-Does your school have an SOP? “No.”

-What about a pre-accident plan? [Do students know what to do if there is an accident? Who to call first, who to call second, and so on.]

“It’s in the checklist, in the training. There is no preaccident plan.”

-Do you have emergency contact information?

“Usually... we have that number in a file.”

-Do you have safety meetings?

“From time to time. Not as often as I would like. From time to time. After we had the accident, I had a meeting and encouraged everyone to say whatever they felt, that I spoke from my heart, I thought of this kid as my son. He lost his father when he was 5. I think he saw me as a father figure. He was a very good pilot.”

How do you log the discovery flights? How is billing done?

“We encourage them to buy a logbook. The customer pays [me] and then I pay the pilot.”

Mr. Waizman was asked how he measured student progress and quality control with his students, and he said,

“We switch up instructors every now and then to measure progress. Solo students have to fly with 2 other instructors before solo. IP changes require a conversation between former and new instructor.”

BILLING _ “We have a sheet of prices. Ground is mandatory. You buy blocks of time.”

END OF STATEMENT