



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Atlanta, Georgia	Accident Number:	DCA22LA178
Date & Time:	August 6, 2022, 21:15 Local	Registration:	N540US
Aircraft:	Boeing 757-251	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Tailstrike	Injuries:	203 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 121: Air carrier - Scheduled		

Analysis

Delta Air Lines flight 1696 sustained a tailstrike while landing at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL), Atlanta, GA. The flight was a regularly scheduled domestic passenger flight from Fort Lauderdale, FL (FLL) to ATL. The airplane sustained substantial damage, and there were no injuries to the 203 passengers and crew onboard.

According to the flight crew, the captain was the pilot monitoring, and the first officer (FO) was the pilot flying. The captain reported that he was providing operational experience to the FO and that it was the FO's first time landing the Boeing 757-200 model airplane. The airplane was in the landing configuration with flaps at 25 and on a stabilized approach at 1000 ft above ground level (AGL) on final approach to Runway 10 in night visual condition. After touchdown, the speed brakes deployed, and the FO reported that he applied too much aft pressure on the yoke causing the plane to lift back off the ground and the captain executed a "go-around" procedure. At this time the captain assumed the pilot flying role, and the airplane landed uneventfully.

Both the captain and FO reported they had no indications of a tailstrike on the flight deck, they did not receive any passenger or flight attendant reports of any abnormalities and were unaware a tailstrike had occurred until the plane was inspected by maintenance later.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The overpitch control of the airplane during landing resulting in a tail strike.

Findings

Aircraft	Landing flare - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Flight crew
Personnel issues	Identification/recognition - Flight crew

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing-flare/touchdown	Tailstrike (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Private	Age:	56,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Unknown	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 9, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	August 16, 2022
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 12257 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1340 hours (Total, this make and model), 174 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Co-pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport	Age:	37,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Unknown	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 24, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	July 15, 2022
Flight Time:	203 hours (Total, all aircraft), 0 hours (Total, this make and model), 10 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Boeing	Registration:	N540US
Model/Series:	757-251	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1996	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Transport	Serial Number:	26487
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	178
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 3, 2022 Continuous airworthiness	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	241000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Turbo fan
Airframe Total Time:	7812.58 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	P & W
ELT:	C91A installed	Engine Model/Series:	PW2037
Registered Owner:	DELTA AIR LINES INC	Rated Power:	37530 Lbs thrust
Operator:	DELTA AIR LINES INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Flag carrier (121)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Night
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KATL	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 14000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 25000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None /
Wind Direction:	70°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.15 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C / 22°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Fort Lauderdale, FL (KFL)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	Atlanta, GA	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Atlanta Hartsfield Jackson International KATL	Runway Surface Type:	Concrete
Airport Elevation:	1026 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	Runway 10	IFR Approach:	ILS
Runway Length/Width:	9000 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	6 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	197 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	203 None	Latitude, Longitude:	33.6407,-84.4277(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Lovell, John
Additional Participating Persons:	Shannon Masters; Delta Air Lines; Atlanta, GA Jon Sheehan ; Delta ALPA Safety David Gerlach; FAA AVP-100
Original Publish Date:	July 16, 2024
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=105714

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).