Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Seattle, Washington	**Accident Number:**	DCA25LA117
Date & Time:	February 5, 2025, 10:15 Local	**Registration:**	N3737C (A1); JA868J (A2)
Aircraft:	Boeing 737-832 (A1); Boeing 787 (A2)	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial (A1); Minor (A2)
Defining Event:	Ground collision	**Injuries:**	150 None (A1); 185 None (A2)
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 121: Air carrier - Scheduled (A1); Part 129: Foreign (A2)		

Analysis

The accident occurred when the right wingtip of Japan Airlines flight 68 (JAL68), a Boeing 787-9 collided with the vertical stabilizer of Delta Air Lines flight 1921 (DL1921), a Boeing 737-832 while taxiing to the gate after landing at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA), Seattle, Washington. There were no injuries to passengers or crew on either airplane and DL1921 sustained substantial damage to its empennage.

The DL1921 flight crew reported that after pushback from gate A11 and taxiing via taxiway W, they were instructed to hold short of spot 99 and sequence for the south deice pad. DL1921 was stopped with the parking brake set abeam deice spot 1, waiting for marshalling and further clearance. According to the captain, the uncontrolled deice ramp was congested, slippery due to light snow and deicing fluid, and lacked defined hold points and marshalling guidance.

The DL1921 flight crew stated that they were parked in position behind an Airbus A220 awaiting deice when they were struck from behind by a taxiing aircraft. The captain of DL1921 reported no prior indication that another aircraft was approaching from the rear and stated that he believed his aircraft was safely parked awaiting ground guidance. The first officer of DL1921 stated that he observed the approaching JAL68 aircraft's wing moving uncomfortably close and alerted the captain, but the Delta aircraft could not move forward due to deice truck traffic and lack of a ground marshal. Moments later, the JAL68 aircraft's right wingtip contacted the tail section of DL1921.

According to statements from the JAL68 flight crew, they were taxiing toward gate S8 after landing on runway 16L. Due to congestion, the crew received multiple routing changes via ramp control, including taxi to spot 88 and subsequently back to spot 99 before re-entering the ramp toward S8. While maneuvering in the congested ramp near stands S15 and S16, the JAL68 captain (pilot flying) offset slightly left of centerline to maintain spacing with DL1921. The captain reported confirming with the

first officer (pilot monitoring) whether the right wingtip was clear. The first officer responded that it appeared clear, but later recognized this was a misjudgment.

The Japan Airlines crew estimated taxi speed at about 2 knots prior to contact. Both the captain and the observer crewmember reported they were aware of the proximity of the Delta aircraft but believed clearance would be maintained. The right wingtip of JAL68's B-787 subsequently struck the tail of the parked DL1921.

Following the collision, both crews initiated standard checklists. The Delta crew reported no injuries, secured the aircraft, and coordinated with Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) and airport operations for passenger deplaning via buses. The Japan Airlines crew stopped engines after receiving signals from Delta ground staff and reported the occurrence to ATC and company dispatch.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The Japan Airlines flight crew's failure to maintain adequate clearance from the parked Delta Air Lines aircraft while taxiing in congested ramp conditions.

Findings

Environmental issues (A1)	(general) - Effect on operation
Environmental issues (A1)	(general) - Contributed to outcome
Personnel issues (A2)	Perception - Flight crew

Factual Information

History of Flight

Standing-engine(s) operating (A1)	Ground collision (Defining event)
Taxi-from runway (A2)	Ground collision

Pilot Information (A1)

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Flight engineer	**Age:**	64,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	5-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	
Medical Certification:	Class 1 With waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	November 18, 2024
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	October 27, 2024
Flight Time:	11757 hours (Total, all aircraft), 6444 hours (Total, this make and model), 4431 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 100 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 32 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Co-pilot Information (A1)

Certificate:	Airline transport; Flight instructor	**Age:**	45,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		**Restraint Used:**	5-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine	**Toxicology Performed:**	
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Without waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	November 4, 2024
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	November 25, 2024
Flight Time:	7005 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1229 hours (Total, this make and model), 4634 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 150 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 66 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Pilot Information (A2)

Certificate:	Airline transport	**Age:**	48,
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Without waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	January 6, 2025
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	January 17, 2025
Flight Time:	12040 hours (Total, all aircraft), 6059 hours (Total, this make and model), 1278 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 169 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 39 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Co-pilot Information (A2)

Certificate:	Commercial	**Age:**	32
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:**	
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Without waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	November 8, 2024
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	February 2, 2025
Flight Time:	1995 hours (Total, all aircraft), 540 hours (Total, this make and model), 18 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 203 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 91 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information (A1)

Aircraft Make:	Boeing	**Registration:**	N3737C
Model/Series:	737-832	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	2000	**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Transport	**Serial Number:**	30799
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	**Seats:**	168
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 3, 2025 Continuous airworthiness	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	174900 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	2 Turbo fan
Airframe Total Time:	68606 Hrs at time of accident	**Engine Manufacturer:**	CFM INTL.
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	CFM56 -7B26
Registered Owner:	DELTA AIR LINES INC	**Rated Power:**	26000 Lbs thrust
Operator:	DELTA AIR LINES INC	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	Flag carrier (121)
Operator Does Business As:		**Operator Designator Code:**	DALA

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information (A2)

Aircraft Make:	Boeing	**Registration:**	JA868J
Model/Series:	787 9	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	2017	**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Transport	**Serial Number:**	34845
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	**Seats:**	209
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 15, 2024 Continuous airworthiness	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	547000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	2 Turbo fan
Airframe Total Time:	34830.3 Hrs at time of accident	**Engine Manufacturer:**	General Electric
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	Genx-1B74/75/P2
Registered Owner:	Japan Air Lines	**Rated Power:**	68600 Lbs thrust
Operator:	Japan Air Lines	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	Foreign air carrier (129)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KSEA	**Distance from Accident Site:**	
Observation Time:		**Direction from Accident Site:**	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 1000 ft AGL	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 3600 ft AGL	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots / None	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	None / None
Wind Direction:	30°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	29.86 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	1°C / -1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Seattle, WA (A1); Narita, Japan (A2)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	IFR (A1)
Destination:	Puerto Vallarta, Mexico (MMPR) (A1); Seattle, WA (A2)	**Type of Clearance:**	IFR (A1); IFR (A2)
Departure Time:	18:16 Local (A2)	**Type of Airspace:**	Class B (A1); Class B (A2)

Airport Information

Airport:	SEATTLE-TACOMA INTL SEA	**Runway Surface Type:**	
Airport Elevation:	432 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	
Runway Used:		**IFR Approach:**	Unknown
Runway Length/Width:		**VFR Approach/Landing:**	

Wreckage and Impact Information (A1)

Crew Injuries:	6 None	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	144 None	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:		**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	150 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	47.437114,-122.30399

Wreckage and Impact Information (A2)

Crew Injuries:	13 None	**Aircraft Damage:**	Minor
Passenger Injuries:	172 None	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:		**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	185 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	47.437114,-122.30399

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Bower, Daniel
Additional Participating Persons:	Akira Nishigawa; JTSB; Tokyo FAA Representative ; FAA
Original Publish Date:	October 14, 2025
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=199653

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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.