



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	FLUSHING, New York	Accident Number:	NYC00LA267
Date & Time:	September 15, 2000, 20:45 Local	Registration:	N461PR
Aircraft:	Boeing 737-49R	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	58 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 121: Air carrier - Scheduled		

Analysis

The airplane was being pushed back at night by three ground crew employees when its rudder struck a parked airplane. Both 'wing walkers' were equipped with night wands, and had signaled the tug driver to stop prior to the accident. One wing walker stated he noticed that the airplane was getting 'very close' to the MD-80, and signaled the tug operator to stop 'several times' before the accident. The tug operator stated, '...one of the wing walkers signaled me to stop, but I was looking at the other wing walker. He told me to stop, but when I hit the brake it was too late....' The tug operator had been hired and began performing airplane pushbacks in December 1998. The weather reported about the time of the pushback, included: a visibility of 10 statute miles, and scattered clouds at 8, 500 feet msl.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The tug operator's inadequate visual lookout. A factor in this accident was the night light condition.

Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: TAXI - PUSHBACK/TOW

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - NIGHT
2. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - INADEQUATE - GROUND PERSONNEL

Factual Information

On September 15, 2000, about 2045 Eastern Daylight Time, a Boeing 737-49R, N461PR, operated by Pro Air Inc., as flight 325, was substantially damaged during pushback for taxi at the La Guardia Airport (LGA), Flushing, New York. The 2 flight crewmembers, 3 flight attendants, and 53 passengers were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and an instrument flight rules flight plan had been filed for the flight destined for the Detroit City Airport, Detroit, Michigan. The scheduled passenger flight was conducted under 14 CFR Part 121.

According to a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector, the airplane was being pushed back from gate C-4, by three Signature Flight Support ground crew employees. During the pushback, the airplane's rudder struck an MD-80, which was parked at a gate across from N461PR.

According to a Signature Flight Support representative, both "wing walkers" were equipped with night wands, and had signaled the tug driver to stop prior to the accident. One wing walker stated he noticed that the airplane was getting "very close" to the MD-80, and signaled the tug operator to stop "several times" before the accident.

The tug operator stated, "...one of the wing walkers signaled me to stop, but I was looking at the other wing walker. He told me to stop, but when I hit the brake it was too late...."

According to a Signature Flight Support manager, the tug operator had been hired and began performing airplane pushbacks in December 1998.

The weather reported at LGA, at 2051, included: a visibility of 10 statute miles, and scattered clouds at 8, 500 feet msl.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport	Age:	42, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 29, 2000
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	10694 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Boeing	Registration:	N461PR
Model/Series:	737-49R 737-49R	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Transport	Serial Number:	28882
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	155
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 29, 2000 Continuous airworthiness	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	143500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Turbo fan
Airframe Total Time:	9087 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Cfm
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	CFM56-3C1
Registered Owner:	PRO AIR INC.	Rated Power:	23500 Lbs thrust
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Flag carrier (121)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	P90A

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Night/bright
Observation Facility, Elevation:	LGA ,22 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	20:51 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 8500 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	330°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	19°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(LGA)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	DETROIT , MI (DET)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	00:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class B

Airport Information

Airport:	LA GUARDIA LGA	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	22 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	5 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	53 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	58 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Schiada, Luke
Additional Participating Persons:	PETER V BONO; GARDEN CITY , NY
Original Publish Date:	May 8, 2001
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=50347

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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](#).