



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Buena Vista, Colorado	<b>Accident Number:</b>	DCA12CA062
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	April 15, 2012, 05:49 UTC	<b>Registration:</b>	N808AW
<b>Aircraft:</b>	AIRBUS INDUSTRIE A319-132	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Minor
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Turbulence encounter	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Serious, 1 Minor, 95 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 121: Air carrier - Scheduled		

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## Analysis

On 15 April 2012, at approximately 0549 coordinated universal time, US Airways flight 496, an Airbus A319-132, N808AW, encountered severe mountain wave turbulence at flight level 320 in the vicinity of Buena Vista, Colorado. Of the 98 passengers and crew onboard, two flight attendants received serious injuries and one passenger received minor injuries during the encounter. The flight was operating under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 121 as a regularly scheduled passenger flight between Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (KPHX), Phoenix, Arizona, and Denver International Airport (KDEN), Denver, Colorado.

According to the operator, the captain was the pilot monitoring, and the first officer (FO) was the pilot flying. The flight was cleared to descend from FL390 to 17,000 feet. The seatbelt sign was on during the descent and there were no pilot reports of turbulence in the area. The captain turned on the weather radar and noted no returns present between the airplane and the airport. As the airplane passed through about FL320, the captain noticed the airspeed rapidly increasing. He disconnected the autopilot while simultaneously notifying the FO of the overspeed and began to apply a nose-up input. The FO also began to command a nose-up input at that time and so the captain released his pitch up input. The crew received an overspeed warning and then encountered severe turbulence. The flight crew stated the encounter lasted about 10 – 15 seconds. After the encounter, both Elevator and Aileron Computers (ELAC) faults were displayed. The FO resumed pilot flying duties while the Captain performed the appropriate actions to reset ELAC 1 and 2, report the encounter to air traffic control and dispatch, and contacted the flight attendants.

The A flight attendant (A-FA) was in the forward jumpseat and the B flight attendant (B-FA) and C flight attendant (C-FA) were in the aft galley sitting in their jumpseats without their seatbelts on. During the turbulence encounter, both aft flight attendants struck the overhead ceiling, panels before landing on the floor. Two passengers who were also not wearing their seatbelts were lifted out of their seats and struck the ceiling panels during the encounter. Oxygen masks in several rows of seats were also released

as a result of the turbulence. Two onboard medical personnel tended to the B-FA and C-FA with the assistance of the A-FA.

The captain declared a medical emergency and arranged for emergency personnel to meet the flight on arrival. At the gate, paramedics transported the two injured flight attendants and one of the injured passengers to the hospital.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: an inadvertent encounter with mountain wave turbulence.

### Findings

<b>Environmental issues</b>	Terrain induced turbulence - Effect on personnel
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## Factual Information

### History of Flight

<b>Enroute-descent</b>	Turbulence encounter (Defining event)
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### Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	<b>Age:</b>
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	<b>Restraint Used:</b>
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>
<b>Flight Time:</b>	

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	AIRBUS INDUSTRIE	<b>Registration:</b>	N808AW
<b>Model/Series:</b>	A319-132	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Transport	<b>Serial Number:</b>	1088
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	179
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	2 Turbo jet
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	IAE
<b>ELT:</b>		<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	V2500SERIES
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	U S BANK NA TRUSTEE	<b>Rated Power:</b>	25000 Lbs thrust
<b>Operator:</b>	US AIRWAYS INC	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	Flag carrier (121)
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>		<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	USAA

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Night/dark
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>		<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Observation Time:</b>		<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>		<b>Visibility</b>	
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>		<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	/	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>		<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>		<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>			
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Phoenix, AZ (KPHX)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	IFR
<b>Destination:</b>	Denver, CO	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	IFR
<b>Departure Time:</b>	04:50 UTC	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	2 Serious, 3 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Minor
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Minor, 92 None	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 Serious, 1 Minor, 95 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	38.834999,-106.278892(est)

## Administrative Information

**Investigator In Charge (IIC):** Bower, Daniel

**Additional Participating Persons:**

**Original Publish Date:** March 9, 2018

**Last Revision Date:**

**Investigation Class:** [Class](#)

**Note:** This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.

**Investigation Docket:** <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=83410>

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.

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