

Analyzes a historic
aircraft accident with
causal factors
associated with a
weath...

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



The L'Express Airlines Flight 508 Crash Name: Course: Date: The L'Express Airlines Flight 508 Crash With the sophisticated development characterizing aviation technology, aircrafts provide momentous business opportunities and expediency to transportation. Moreover, aviation technology has provided aircraft with novel machinery that has enhanced detection of various factors that can pose as imminent risks towards the control of aircraft. Despite the positive changes in the aviation environment, there are still considerable risks that cannot be mitigated. One such risk arises from the effect of weather. Most airplane crashes are attributed to severe weather.

This is because weather changes are sometimes unpredictable or in other circumstances, prove to be strong to override aircraft control. In order to understand the effect of weather on aircraft, it is important to assess a weather related aircraft accident such as the L'Express Airlines Flight 508 crash. On 10 July 1991, an L'Express Airlines plane, Beech 99, was flying from New Orleans as Flight 508 heading to Birmingham as the area of destination. The airplane was attempting to execute an instrument landing system (ILS) approach to Runway 6 at Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport in Birmingham, Alabama. However, the airplane crashed on its course to the runway in the Fairview area near Ensley neighborhood. Four persons were subsequently injured on land and two homes were destroyed by the crash of the airplane. Thirteen people among the fifteen occupants in the airplane died.

The causal factor for the crash was mainly attributed to severe thunderstorms as the pilot attempted to make an ILS that resulted to the

pilot losing control over the airplane (United States, 1992). The crash to date is the deadliest commercial aircraft accident in the history of Alabama. The type of airplane crash in terms of airplane accidents was described as a Collision with Obstacles and the Terrain accident resulting from weather interferences. The L'Express Flight 508 was run by a Beech 99 turboprop dual engine aircraft.

The seating arrangement on the airplane was defined by five rows each bearing two seats. Moreover, the seats were arranged on a central aisle on each side. A solitary seat was situated across the passenger door as of the left. A double seat was positioned at the stern of the airplane. Passengers boarded the airplane through the back passenger door. The flight departed from New Orleans, Los Angeles with one passenger at around four o' clock, landing in Mobile Regional Airport, Alabama at around five o' clock. After 12 passengers boarded the airplane and the crews changed, the plane left for Birmingham Airport at precisely 5. 05 p.

m. (United States, 1992). The flight course to Birmingham Airport was characterized by strong thunderstorms around the surrounding area of the airport.

Around that exact time that the thunderstorms began developing, four other airplanes either delayed their landing approaches and initiated holding patterns or diverted to other airstrips. They carried out such procedures until the weather improved. However, the Flight 508 crew was vividly sentient of the thunderstorms but decided to carry on with the approach. After going

into a harsh thunderstorm cell between the west and the south of the airport, the crew lost control and therefore lacked the ability to convalesce the aircraft before crashing into two houses located in Ensley neighborhood in Birmingham at precisely 6.

11 p. m. Moreover, the airplane struck another house, crossed a residential street and crashed into a second house immediately exploded into flames (United States, 1992). Media coverage reported the incident at six o' clock, around the same time the accident occurred. This was possible because the aircraft crashed during the evening news transmissions. Local media reports commenced around 6. 45 p. m.

with local ABC television WBRC broadcasting the accident live. What was noteworthy during the media coverage was the fact that the ABC affiliate, WBRC, had been recording weather radar images warning of the thunderstorms that were developing in the area around Birmingham Airport. According to Smothers (1991), the captain of the L'Express, Francis Fernandes, who was at the steering controls of the plane asserted that a considerable roll was experienced by the plane to the left on its landing approach. Fernandes also asserted that the airplane experienced an excessive updraft that forced the nose of the plane in the air. Both roll and updraft movements of the plane affected the flight of the plane making it lose stability (IDC Create, 2010). Despite the media providing evidence of imminent severe weather before the crash, the crash was not reported as pilot error. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) was responsible for the investigation of the accident.

The board dispatched a team of aviation researchers to probe the crash. The primary focal point of the investigation was instantly centered on the weather. The board prioritized the effect of the weather on the accident since the plane crashed at the exact time the thunderstorms developed. Moreover, the investigation team obtained meteorological evidence from WBRC television, which would be utilized for the probe, and any proceedings related to the accident. The inspectors were surprised to find a cockpit voice recorder inside the plane. The recorder was used to record the auditory environment in a plane's flight deck.

Hence, the recorder was not required for the specific type of plane involved in the crash at that time. The NTSB later asserted that the plane lost control resulting from the plane initiating a landing approach in severe thunderstorm activity (United States, 1992). Weather plays an important role in the control of aircraft. Despite weather being far from the control of human beings, there have been technologies that have been created such as radars to provide information for the area the aircraft will pass through. Furthermore, airports have weather stations that advice pilots on the best route to use in order to avoid potential severe weather areas.

However, negligence of such information causes many weather related aircraft accidents. Hence, it is important to stress on the need to use the information provided for safety purposes.