



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Location:</b>               | LOS ANGELES, CA                           | <b>Accident Number:</b> | LAX95LA255  |
| <b>Date &amp; Time:</b>        | 07/17/1995, 2155 PDT                      | <b>Registration:</b>    | N268UE      |
| <b>Aircraft:</b>               | EMBRAER EMB-120 RT                        | <b>Aircraft Damage:</b> | Substantial |
| <b>Defining Event:</b>         |   | <b>Injuries:</b>        | 6 None      |
| <b>Flight Conducted Under:</b> | Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Scheduled |                         |             |

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## Analysis

UNITED EXPRESS UTILIZES A PORTION OF A UNITED AIRLINES MAINTENANCE RAMP AS A COMMUTER TERMINAL. AFTER LOADING PASSENGERS FOR A SCHEDULED COMMUTER FLIGHT, THE AIRCRAFT COLLIDED WITH A PARKED BOEING 767-222 WHILE TAXIING ON THE MAINTENANCE RAMP TOWARD A TAXIWAY WHICH GOES TO THE ASSIGNED DEPARTURE RUNWAY. UNITED HAD ESTABLISHED A TAXI LANE IN THE MAINTENANCE AREA WITH A YELLOW GUIDANCE LINE WHICH PROVIDES CLEARANCE FROM ALL PARKED AIRCRAFT. THE CAPTAIN OF THE EMBRAER STATED THAT IN ORDER TO AVOID A POSSIBLE DEPARTURE DELAY SHE ELECTED NOT TO USE THE DESIGNATED TAXI LANE, BUT RATHER GO DIRECTLY ACROSS A NON-MOVEMENT AIRCRAFT PARKING AREA TO THE ACTIVE TAXIWAY. THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT CLEARANCE FOR THE EMBRAER ALONG THE CAPTAIN'S PLANNED TAXI ROUTE AND THE VERTICAL STABILIZER STRUCK THE HORIZONTAL STABILIZER OF THE PARKED BOEING 767.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the captain's decision to taxi across a non-movement aircraft parking area instead of using the designated taxi lane to exit the ramp. A factor in the accident was the dark night environmental lighting conditions.

## Findings

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

### Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - NIGHT
2. AIRPORT FACILITIES, TAXIWAY CONDITION - CONGESTED/CONFINED AREA
3. OBJECT - AIRCRAFT PARKED/STANDING
4. (C) WRONG TAXI ROUTE - SELECTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Factual Information

On July 17, 1995, at 2155 hours Pacific daylight time, a Embraer EMB-120RT, N268UE, collided with a parked Boeing 767-222, N612UA, on the United Airlines maintenance ramp at Los Angeles International Airport, Los Angeles, California. The airplane was being operated by West Air Commuter Airlines, Inc., dba United Express, as a scheduled domestic passenger flight under 14 CFR Part 135. The commuter airplane was substantially damaged. There were no injuries to the three crewmembers or to the three passengers. The flight was destined for Palm Springs, California. Night visual meteorological conditions prevailed.

The ramp area lease holder is United Airlines. United Airlines allocates space to United Express to operate a Commuter Air Terminal and park their aircraft. According to agreements with the airport authorities, movement of aircraft within the leasehold is the responsibility of the operator and is done without air traffic control clearance or guidance.

A taxiway was designated by the lease holder for the movement of United Express aircraft to the edge of the ramp area at taxiway 27K and taxiway 19K. The leasehold taxiway provided clearance for United Express aircraft while gaining access to airport taxiways and runways. The taxiway was marked with yellow centerline and taxiway edge stripping. The width of the taxiway was sufficient for a towed Boeing 737 aircraft to clear other aircraft parked in designated numbered spots. A diagram of the taxiway was provided by the leaseholder, United Airlines, to United Express and to Los Angeles International Airport operations.

The captain of the Embraer EMB-120RT elected to taxi in a non- movement area and did not use the designated taxiway. The United Express captain told the Safety Board her decision was based on avoiding a delay as a result of encountering a possible conflict with any aircraft being towed for maintenance while gaining access at taxiway 19K.

A construction project had closed the taxiway 27K, which was normally used to exit the ramp. The captain planned to use taxiway 23K further to the east by taxiing behind a row of Boeing 737 aircraft.

The captain was taxiing behind the row of parked Boeing 737 aircraft, between the row and an airport access road. A Boeing 767 was parked at the east end of the row near the area where the taxiway joins the ramp. The captain indicated the Embraer's right wing was close to the access road. After the nose of the Embraer cleared the tail of the Boeing 767, the captain turned left towards the Boeing 767 and away from the access road. The left horizontal stabilizer of the Embraer then collided with the bottom of the right elevator on the Boeing 767, twisting the vertical stabilizer on the Embraer about 30 degrees counterclockwise.

## Pilot Information

|                                  |  |  |                            |
|----------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| <b>Certificate:</b>              | Airline Transport  | <b>Age:</b>                              | 36, Female                 |
| <b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>       | Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land  | <b>Seat Occupied:</b>                    | Left                       |
| <b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b> | None   | <b>Restraint Used:</b>                   | Seatbelt, Shoulder harness |
| <b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>     | Airplane   | <b>Second Pilot Present:</b>             | Yes                        |
| <b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>     | Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane   | <b>Toxicology Performed:</b>             | No                         |
| <b>Medical Certification:</b>    | Class 1 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.   | <b>Last Medical Exam:</b>                | 06/23/1995                 |
| <b>Occupational Pilot:</b>       |  | <b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b> |                            |
| <b>Flight Time:</b>              | 13087 hours (Total, all aircraft), 3866 hours (Total, this make and model), 11587 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 264 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 87 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) |  |                            |

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

|                                      |                                      |   |                            |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Aircraft Manufacturer:</b>        | EMBRAER                              | <b>Registration:</b>                      | N268UE                     |
| <b>Model/Series:</b>                 | EMB-120 RT EMB-120 RT                | <b>Aircraft Category:</b>                 | Airplane                   |
| <b>Year of Manufacture:</b>          |                                      | <b>Amateur Built:</b>                     | No                         |
| <b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>    | Transport                            | <b>Serial Number:</b>                     | 120-207                    |
| <b>Landing Gear Type:</b>            | Retractable - Tricycle               | <b>Seats:</b>                             | 34                         |
| <b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b> | 07/10/1995, Continuous Airworthiness | <b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>           | 25353 lbs                  |
| <b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>   | 47 Hours                             | <b>Engines:</b>                           | 2 Turbo Prop               |
| <b>Airframe Total Time:</b>          | 12114 Hours                          | <b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>               | P&W                        |
| <b>ELT:</b>                          | Installed, not activated             | <b>Engine Model/Series:</b>               | PW-118                     |
| <b>Registered Owner:</b>             | FIRST SECURITY BANK OF UTAH          | <b>Rated Power:</b>                       | 1800 hp                    |
| <b>Operator:</b>                     | WEST AIR COMMUTER AIRLINES INC       | <b>Air Carrier Operating Certificate:</b> | Commuter Air Carrier (135) |
| <b>Operator Does Business As:</b>    | UNITED EXPRESS                       | <b>Operator Designator Code:</b>          | WTAA                       |

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

|                                  |                          |                               |               |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site:     | Visual Conditions        | Condition of Light:           | Night/Dark    |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | LAX, 126 ft msl          | Observation Time:             | 2245 PDT      |
| Distance from Accident Site:     | 0 Nautical Miles         | Direction from Accident Site: | 0°            |
| Lowest Cloud Condition:          | Scattered / 12000 ft agl | Temperature/Dew Point:        | 19° C / 16° C |
| Lowest Ceiling:                  | None / 0 ft agl          | Visibility                    | 15 Miles      |
| Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:     | 4 knots, 140°            | Visibility (RVR):             | 0 ft          |
| Altimeter Setting:               | 29 inches Hg             | Visibility (RVV):             | 0 Miles       |
| Precipitation and Obscuration:   |                          |                               |               |
| Departure Point:                 | (LAX)                    | Type of Flight Plan Filed:    | IFR           |
| Destination:                     | PALM SPRINGS, CA (PSP)   | Type of Clearance:            | VFR           |
| Departure Time:                  | 0000                     | Type of Airspace:             | Class D       |

## Airport Information

|                      |                                 |                           |      |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------|
| Airport:             | LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL (LAX) | Runway Surface Type:      |      |
| Airport Elevation:   | 126 ft                          | Runway Surface Condition: |      |
| Runway Used:         | 0                               | IFR Approach:             | None |
| Runway Length/Width: |                                 | VFR Approach/Landing:     | None |

## Wreckage and Impact Information

|                     |        |                      |             |
|---------------------|--------|----------------------|-------------|
| Crew Injuries:      | 3 None | Aircraft Damage:     | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | 3 None | Aircraft Fire:       | None        |
| Ground Injuries:    | N/A    | Aircraft Explosion:  | None        |
| Total Injuries:     | 6 None | Latitude, Longitude: |             |

## Administrative Information

|                                   |   |               |            |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------|------------|
| Investigator In Charge (IIC):     | THOMAS H WILCOX   | Adopted Date: | 11/30/1995 |
| Additional Participating Persons: | ROBERT P CHRISTOPHER; LOS ANGELES, CA   |               |            |
| Publish Date:                     |   |               |            |
| Investigation Docket:             | NTSB accident and incident docket serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at <a href="mailto:pubinq@ntsb.gov">pubinq@ntsb.gov</a> , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/</a> . |               |            |

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report.