

Statement of Captain [REDACTED]
UAL Flight 15, February 14, 2015

I was the Captain of UAL flight 15 on February 14, 2015, that encountered severe turbulence.

We met as a crew in the flight planning area at around 8 AM. After reviewing all of the dispatch paperwork and weather information, I called dispatch to add 2000lbs of fuel for anticipated deviations which we may encounter during the flight. I added this fuel because I had just returned from HNL the previous day, and had to deviate over 100 miles due to weather. I also relayed that info to the First Officer (FO) and International Relief Officer (IRO) that were on flight 15.

When I arrived at the aircraft boarding had already started. I briefed the lead flight attendant, to include the anticipated weather. The briefing advised her of the chance of areas of light to moderate turbulence along the route we were going to fly, and of my experience of the previous flight and that we had to have the flight attendants remain seated for well over an hour on that flight.

Our flight across the continental United States was uneventful and only passed through areas of very light turbulence, this required the seat belt sign to be turned on. As we coasted out over the Pacific Ocean, in the vicinity of Los Angeles, we received an ACARS message from dispatch. The dispatcher advised us of an area of possible embedded thunderstorms, which the IRO, who was now seated in the right seat, plotted the area on our long range navigation chart. Shortly thereafter, the FO returned from her crew rest, and I briefed her on the progress of our flight and the area of possible thunderstorms. With the IRO now in the left seat, I departed the flightdeck for my crew rest. While on rest, I noticed that we were encountering areas of light to moderate turbulence.

During this encounter with the turbulence, I observed that the seat belt sign was on and there were several announcements for the passengers to remain seated with their seat belts on.

I decided to return to the flightdeck about an hour before arrival to HNL. Prior to entering the flightdeck, I noticed that the flight attendants were seated in their jumpseats. I advised the lead flight attendant to remain seated and she told me that the flightdeck had already advised them to do so.

Upon being seated, I requested and was approved to climb to FL360 in attempt to find a smooth altitude. We then received an ACARS message from SFO ARINC advising us that we could expect a smooth ride at FL240. I was the flying pilot so upon establishing radio contact with Honolulu, the FO requested a descent to FL240. At that time we both had our weather radars on, mine was set to the wx/turb mode, and set at 1-2 degrees nose down. At no time did either of our radars display any wx. As we were descending through FL290-FL280 the ride began to smooth out. Then unexpectedly as we approached FL250 we encountered a severe jolt. After the encounter with the turbulence, the IRO called the lead flight attendant to see if everything was OK. The lead flight attendant informed him that some of the flight attendants in the aft cabin may

have been hurt. After we found out that there might be some serious injuries, we declared an emergency and proceeded direct to HNL for an uneventful approach and landing.

Statement of First Officer [REDACTED]
UAL Flight 15, February 14, 2015

I showed at operations at about 0805 for the flight to HNL. The Captain, IRO and myself reviewed paperwork and discussed fuel, NOTAMS, and weather. The Captain printed the paperwork. I made up the plotting chart and downloaded the SABRE flight plan package to include a personalized map (FIRs, enroute alternates, and upper winds). I also downloaded WSI weather and weather through the Jeppesen Application.

We proceeded to the aircraft to begin preflight duties. Everything was normal and as expected. We continued the flight across the country and I went on break around 1845Z. I returned from break about 2200Z and the IRO went to the back for a quick break. During that time, the Captain briefed me on when he wanted to climb and all other necessary briefing items. There was an aircraft just above us and we needed to wait until it climbed or maybe traveled far enough beyond for us to be able to climb. The Captain also showed me the plotting chart where they had plotted out an area of convective activity and turbulence. We were not going to be able to climb out of the forecast area of that weather due to aircraft performance. We also discussed coast out SOPs, fuel, and his return time to the cockpit.

We were at FL340 and there was light turbulence on and off for the next 2 hours. We called back to the flight attendants to seat them at least twice during that time period. The seatbelt sign was on nearly all of the time. I believe we turned it off once to permit passengers to get up. Also, during this time, the Dispatcher sent us another update on turbulence. We verified that it was the same area that was previously plotted. Towards the end of the Captain's break, we initiated a climb to FL350 to try to get out of the turbulence and get above the clouds. It didn't help. There was still continuous light turbulence. Shortly after our climb, the Captain called to tell us he was returning to the cockpit. After the Captain returned, we initiated another climb to FL360 to try to again top the clouds. We were very close to the tops and were hoping for relief.

Once we reached FL360 and decided the ride was not going to get better and the Captain decided we should descend to FL240 (we thought it was smooth there) even though it was early for a descent. It took a little bit of time, we were right on the edge of radar contact, but shortly we were able to contact HNL Center and request a descent.

The Captain made the decision around this time for the flight attendants to not do their final service and communicated this to the lead flight attendant. On his way back to the cockpit from a restroom break, the IRO confirmed with another flight attendant that the service was to be cancelled.

The descent was mostly in light turbulence with a moderate bump now and then. Around FL280, the ride started to smooth out. About FL250, we entered a small area of precipitation that was not painting on the radar and experienced a sudden jolt of turbulence. The autopilot did not kick off. Although at the time, I did not consider it to be severe. I felt like it was just sudden and unexpected. We were in IMC and both the Captain and I were monitoring the radar. I believe I was on the 40mi range and he was on 80mi range.

Almost immediately, the flight attendant's called to tell us of injuries. We contacted Dispatch to tell them we needed paramedics to meet the aircraft. Once we realized the seriousness of the flight attendants injuries, we declared a medical emergency and received direct routing to HNL. Paramedics met the aircraft and we wrote up the severe turbulence in the logbook.

Statement of First Officer [REDACTED]
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For flight 15, it was the standard pre-flight FLT, WX, Dispatch briefing and review. As the IRO, I took the first crew rest break and came back up to the flight deck as the flight was above the ABQ area. As we coasted out over the Pacific Ocean at FL340, dispatch sent us a report of light to moderate turbulence extending from our destination to approximately 2.5 hours out. The Captain had me plot these points on the Pacific Orientation Chart and it encompassed our entire route of flight, at almost all Flight Levels. While the Captain was on his required crew rest, the flight encountered some light turbulence, and the FO and I sent a request via CPDLC for FL360. The seat belt sign was on a good portion of the time. About an 1.5 hours from our destination, we set up a restroom break with the flight attendants, and on the way back up to the flight deck, I had a discussion with one of the flight attendants about their last service, which I informed them not to do the last service because it would probably not be a good idea to have the carts out as there were areas of turbulence ahead. The flight attendant agreed and I returned to the flight deck. Shortly thereafter, the Captain returned from his break early and I heard the Captain and FO discuss going down to FL240 to improve the ride. By this time I believe we were in radar contact and cleared to descend to FL240. In the descent we encountered some light to moderate chop but nothing out of the ordinary. As we passed through FL270 the ride smoothed out momentarily, but passing through FL250 we encounter one substantial jolt. I called back to check on the flight attendants, and there were reports that several were injured. The Captain directed me to contact dispatch via SatCom and report injured flight attendants and to coordinate medical personnel meet the plane. The remainder of the flight was uneventful and the injured were deplaned first while the passengers remained in their seats.

Crew Information, Flight 15 EWR-HNL, 14
Feb 2015. Crew members injured during
turbulence. Report includes IOR's.

COMPLETE FLIGHT ATTENDANT
STATEMENT REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY
BOARD

13MAR15

NTSB - DCA15LA067

Flight 15 EWR-HNL 14 Feb2015

B 767-400

AC# N59053



CREW INFORMATION:**FLIGHT 15****EWR-HNL, 14 FEB 2015****B767-400, AC# 59053**

	FA01	L	
	FA03	L	
	FA04	L	
	FM01	L	
	FA05	L	
	FA02	L	
	FA07	L	
	FA06	L	

Flight 15 EWR-HNL B767-400 AC# 59053					
NAME	WORK POSITION	INJURY	STATUS	IOR	
	FA01 UF/UB FWD galley	N	Active-flying		
	FA03 UF/UB MID Galley	N	Active-flying		
	FA04 UE aisle	UNK	Active-Mar	Statement Pending	
	FM01 FSC UF/UB aisle	N	Active-flying		
	FA05 UE aisle	Y Transported to Hospital (Admitted)	OJI WCKP	Statement Pending	
	FA02 UE AFT galley	Y Transported to Hospital (Released)	WKCP-Feb Active-Mar		
	FA07 UF/UB aisle	Y Transported to Hospital (Released)	WKCP-Feb Active-Mar		
	FA06 UE aisle	Y Transported to Hospital (Released)	WKCP-Feb Active-Mar	Statement Pending	

1. [REDACTED] FA01
FA [REDACTED]

severe inflight turbulence

About an 1:10 out of HNL a PA was made that the last service would not be provided due to anticipated rough weather upon descent. the crew started to prepare the cabin for descent,agriculture documents were distributed, that is when the air pocket was hit...sending 4 crew members flying...hitting the ceiling and crashing to the floor. I got out of my jumpseat to assist.. [REDACTED] seemed to be the most severely injured , since she was not moving. She was conscious but in severe pain from her left arm. I secured her arm with my tie, then moved her to a crew rest seat. The seatbelt sign was on and had been on for at least 3hrs prior to the incident occurring.Upon deplaning a passenger indicated that his daughter had a nosebleed,but that was not indicated to the crew while inflight, we directed him to the paramedics on the jetway.

2. [REDACTED], FA03

FA [REDACTED]

Turbulence incident

As we were distributing AGRICULTURE forms, lead made an announcement that pre landing service would be suspended due to the fact that it would be turbulent for our approach. Seat beltt sign had been illuminated for the prior 3hrs of the flight,with intermittent brief periods of time being turned off due to lack of any turbulence,lasting for a brief period. Upon hearing announcement from our lead that service was suspended and turbulence would continue during our descent,I proceeded to mid galley to ensure it was secure. At that time our lead stated that the turbulence was defined as unpredictable and to prepare to secure all&prepare to be seated. Just at that time we were jolted by severe turbulence...I was able to take J/S 2R FWD ...heard screaming thruout cabin,items flying upl. Once turbulence subsided,,I called aft galley and was informed that all crew members has suffered injuries. Information was communicated to the cockpit about injuries, our lead made a final approach/landing announcement and flight attendants would remain seated for the duration of flight. Upon landing paramedics were available to attend to injured crew members, 4 flight attendants were driven to hospital

3. [REDACTED], FA04

FA [REDACTED]

Turbulence incident

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4. [REDACTED], FM01
FA [REDACTED]

Crew hurt due to Turbulence

Approximately 1 hour prior to landing I called cockpit to see if the flight would continue to be turbulent and was told turbulence would be unpredictable in severity. I made an announcement that we would suspend the final service in coach due to reported turbulence. The crew was getting up from their crew rest seats and started securing the back galley for landing. Two crew members [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were handing out agriculture forms while the turbulence had subsided. [REDACTED] returned to the front and was in mid galley and I was in forward galley sitting on my jumpseat when severe turbulence hit. Once it settled down I called to the back to see if crewmembers were ok and was told that 4 of them were lying on the floor, and [REDACTED] was hurt badly I contacted the cockpit immediately and relayed their injuries [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] hit the ceiling and came down hard and [REDACTED] was thrown to the floor. I called the cockpit to tell them we needed to land as soon as possible as each bump was hurting [REDACTED] more. They told me they declared a medical emergency and we would be landing in 20 minutes. [REDACTED] tended to [REDACTED] until he had to return to his jumpseat for landing, and a jumpseat rider took 3L for [REDACTED]. We landed and the medical staff boarded and took off the injured flight attendants. The cockpit did a great job communicating with us and telling us to be seated during moderate turbulence. Because the turbulence was unpredictable we felt we needed to complete the securing of all galleys before taking our jumpseats and it was during a lull in turbulence that we were suddenly hit with severe turbulence. The seat belt sign was turned on and off in the 2 hours prior to landing and was turned on and repeated announcements were made to make sure passengers were seated and belted during the turbulence. It was on when the severe turbulence was experienced.

The cockpit did their best in warning us about the turbulence. We took our jumpseats when we were told to be seated. We needed to secure the galleys for landing, and the only possible solution would be to keep galleys secure at all times. Because turbulence is a common occurrence in and out of Hawaii, perhaps there should not be an emphasis on a cart service the first or last hour of flight out of HNL. We were very lucky to have made the decision not to take the carts out. There would have been more severe injuries if we had.

5. [REDACTED], FA05

FA [REDACTED]
I was working position #5 on Flight 15, 2-14-15. I was in crew rest with FA [REDACTED]. Both [REDACTED] and I were awake and talking while still in our crew rest seats. We noticed it was bumpy and both of us thought it may not be a good idea to take the beverage cart back out into the aisle for our last beverage service. Just as we were thinking that [REDACTED], the FM, came over PA and said due to bumps we would not take the carts back out for last service. A move I applaud because if we were in the aisle, not only would you have had injured crew, passengers would have been injured from items falling off of beverage carts.

After [REDACTED] announcement [REDACTED] and I proceeded to get up from our crew rest to help secure the galley if it was going to be bumpy. I didn't not hear any information from the cockpit as to take seats or anything like that. While in the back galley cleaning up it did get bumpy. I must say though in 32 years of flying, I have had worse turbulence. While securing the galley I felt what appeared the plane to drop quite a bit and that's when I felt G-force type of pressure pressing down on me. From there I felt the plane jump back up and with that I was thrown to ceiling. I hit my head on the plexiglass light cover and knocked out the light. In what felt like suspended animation, hit the light and was then slammed down on to the galley floor where I landed on my left arm. I could feel immediately that something unusual had happened to my arm as I could not move it and it was very painful. The plane kept bucking. I saw FA [REDACTED] fly up too at door 4R. I did not realize that FA [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had also been thrown from door 4L back into the galley. FA [REDACTED] at that time came to hold me down on the galley floor and once bumps stopped, tied his tie around my left arm and neck to act as a sling to get me to the crew rest seats. I was in severe pain and could not feel my arm. Upon landing EMT escorted me and other injured FAs off plane. I was started on a IV right in gate area. Other FAs were given collars and put on boards.

Upon arrival to ER, it was found I had a compound fracture of left elbow and with further x-ray and CT scans, it was found I had a compound fracture along with a broken elbow bone and shattered fragments. Surgery was preformed on Sunday, 2-15, to secure the bone with 2 plates, 7 pins and screws. I was in hospital until 2-18, and after seeing orthopedic surgeon for surgical followup, was released to go back to EWR base on 2-24.

I would suggest better communication from the cockpit as to turbulence ahead. I know clear air turbulence is hard to predict but there had been planes that had diverted due to high winds so I believe this may have been known. As I was in crew rest, I would not have gotten any phone call from cockpit. I do not believe the crew on duty received any either. Like I did say, I have been in worse turbulence but this seemed like the plane dropped.

6. [REDACTED], FA02
FA [REDACTED]

Turbulence

Waking up from crew rest, there was much turbulence. The lead announced that the last service was to be suspended due to turbulence. As I got up from my seat, I noticed [REDACTED] in the a/c right aisle distributing documentation. I proceeded to the aft galley with [REDACTED] to secure the galley. [REDACTED] was strapped into Jumpseat 4L. I was forward facing when extreme turbulence hit. The a/c dropped and I went flying. It dropped twice. The second time I was thrown on the floor on top of [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was behind me and the jumpseat rider was between us.

7. [REDACTED], FA07
FA [REDACTED]

severe unexpected turbulence

For approximately the last two hours of the flight the turbulence was ranging from very light to moderate. First officer [REDACTED] called back numerous times telling the flight attendants to stay seated. At times the seatbelt sign would go off and we would know it was ok to get up. Other times it smoothed out for long periods and we would get up and resume our duties. My last communication with the cockpit was when they were taking their last bathroom breaks and I was blocking for the cockpit door and said we were thinking of suspending the last barcart as it was starting to get choppy again. Note the seatbelt sign had been on for quite awhile at this time. I

believe it was FO [REDACTED] then called back and I answered, he told me it would be choppy like this the rest of the flight. FM [REDACTED] and I had just been discussing our decision about the service prior to the call so I commented that we were not going to take the carts out. To which he replied "that would probably be a good idea." Since it did not seem to be that bumpy in the forward part of the galley and the cockpit had come out for breaks, FM [REDACTED], FA [REDACTED] and I proceeded to hand out the required Agriculture forms for Hawaii. As I made my way toward the aft of the aircraft the turbulence started to pick up again. I made my way to the aft galley. The other crew members started to prepare the galley. I was going to do a walk thru while bringing the HHD's to be stowed upfront as my jumpseat is 1R. The turbulence became severe and I attempted to get into the 4L FWD jumpseat. The aircraft seemed to violently drop and I was thrown up into the ceiling hitting my head and shoulder then slammed down to the floor. FAs [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had also been thrown to the ceiling and we all laid on the floor stunned hurt and tangled together. FA [REDACTED] who had been on the aft facing 4L jumpseat was unharmed. He assisted myself then FA [REDACTED] to get up to both 4L jumpseats. FA [REDACTED] was laying prone on the floor unable to get up. FA [REDACTED] and the jumpseat rider tried to assist her. I don't know who assisted FA [REDACTED] as she was over closer to door 4R by this time. From my jumpseat I yelled into the cabin to a male passenger who had asked if we were ok, to which I answered no and asked if was there anyone hurt in the cabin? He replied he didn't think so. It smoothed out enough that I tried to make my way forward thru the cabin to see if anyone was injured. I noticed in passing that both lavs on that aisle (left) had their doors open and were empty. I passed an empty seat (the flight had been full) and the young man next to it told me his girlfriend had gone to the lav and had not returned. I said I would check the other Lavs on the other side of the plane. I made my way to the mid galley. FA [REDACTED] was there and I told her I was injured could she check the lavs to see if the missing pax was in one. She informed me that she had had her sit on the 3R jumpseat and was un hurt. I went back to her boyfriend and told him she was ok and on a jumpseat. I proceeded to the FWD galley where FM [REDACTED] was in communication with the cockpit. She asked me how it was back there and told her I was injured and it was "bad back there". I stowed my tote bag that was on the floor by my jumpseat in the FWD right closet and took my jumpseat. FA [REDACTED] then came into Galley and made sure it was secure and got me a bag of ice because my shoulder and neck was in excruciating pain. FM [REDACTED] told her be careful and take her jumpseat. FM [REDACTED] and myself did the same. When we landed the paramedics boarded and helped me off the plane to the gate area where I was evaluated and prepped for transport to the hospital along with FA's [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

8. [REDACTED], FA06

Statement provided to Base-SUPV

Approximately 2000 EST/ 1500 Honolulu time an hour before landing the last beverage service was suspended due to turbulence. The captain informed the lead FA who then made an announcement. At that time the crew in the back galley returned the carts and locked up all items. I went to my jump seat at 4R and by the time I reached my jump seat the severe turbulence hit. It was more of a drop causing me to hit the ceiling of the aircraft at door 4r and then I flew back and hit the wall and then slid down hitting the edge of the jump seat with my neck. I also hit the floor of the aircraft on my back and then my head bounced off the floor. At that moment I could not move. I laid on the floor until I was able to move my body into position to get into the jump seat. I remained in my jump seat until the plane landed and EMT boarded the aircraft to remove me. Witnesses were [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].