



Internal Memorandum

Date: 1/28/2016

To: Captain Chris Frederick, Regional Director – ATL
From: Captain M.C. Ritter
Subject: II16-014 NTSB A/C Damage: DAL1409 24-JAN-16 DTW-EWR MD-88-88 N908DE (9008)
CAP: RITTER, M.C.; FO: DAIGLE, S.P.

This statement is provided at the request of the Chief Pilot's Office.

I was Captain, PF.

We arrived at EWR to find our ramp in total disarray. While our gate was ready we were told we would be held out so a 767 behind us that was under tow₂ to be brought to our original gate.

I positioned the aircraft to give the 767 as much room as possible to park, but due to the snow and ice very little of the ramp space was safe to use. The 767 tug operator asked me if it was possible to move my aircraft up a bit more. I moved maybe another 15-20 feet as that was all the room I had. I asked him if that was enough. He said he thought so. I also told him to get a wing walker if he wasn't certain.

A few seconds later we felt and heard a loud bang and the aircraft shuddered. It was obvious we had been hit, but as the tail is not visible from the cockpit we were not sure of the extent of the damage. The APU was not running at the time, and as I suspected the damage was near the tail I didn't want to start it.

I made a PA and called the FA's to make sure there were no injuries or other PAX problems. I made numerous calls to EWR ramp and EWR maintenance in an effort to find out the damage to my jet, but never got a reply other than "a part fell off", which obviously wasn't a whole lot of help.

After over an hour of waiting Delta maintenance finally confirmed the damage was to the left stab and elevator. And the aircraft was safe to move and start the APU. Due to the condition of the ramp and the extreme congestion at this point I demanded the aircraft be towed to the gate.

There seems to be no coordination between ATL and EWR. We should NEVER have left DTW considering the status of our OP's in EWR. The ramp, MTC and the Port Authority were of little help for over an hour.

I definitely feel this costly incident was due to multiple entities attempting to complete a mission that should never have begun. The crew towing the 767 was obviously in a rush to get that AC to the gate, and were not made aware that the 767 was taking our gate until it was too late to exit the ramp area. Again a total lack of coordination and communication. The 767 wasn't due to leave for 1.5 hours and we had a full jet. We were supposed to take the same AC to ATL. We could have easily deplaned, reboarded and been gone before 767 needed that gate.

I acknowledge this statement may be released to Delta Flight Safety and National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

Regards,

Captain M.C. Ritter
Employee # [REDACTED]
(Signature on file)