

Southwest Airlines Co.
Erin Carroll
Manager Air Operations Investigations
Safety and Security
2702 Love Field Drive HDQ1SE
Dallas, TX 75235
[REDACTED]



February 5, 2016

David Helson
Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

RE: Southwest Airlines Flight 1528 Flight Crew Statements

Dave,

Per your request, please find below the statements from the Flight Crew involved in the turbulence event resulting in a Flight Attendant injury on January 28, 2016.

Captain

Multiple forecasted and PIREPS of light to moderate turbulence on our scheduled route from KPVD to KFLL. During the preflight crew brief, I directed the Flight Attendants to remain seated until we reached the planned cruise altitude of FL380 and I would inform them of a safe ride to begin inflight service. All Flight Attendants remained seated until cruise altitude. During cruise I directed the Flight Attendants two times to return to their seats and I made an announcement to the passengers regarding turbulence ahead.

While at FL380 with smooth flight conditions, we were assigned to descend to FL360. The fasten seat belt sign was turned on and an announcement was made to the passengers to remain seated for the remainder of flight. While level at FL360 in smooth air, we encountered light clear air turbulence (CAT) that lasted less than 5 seconds. Less than a minute later I was contacted by a flight attendant that we had an injured flight attendant with an apparent broken ankle. The injured flight attendant was being tended to by two doctors onboard. I immediately made voice contact with KFLL Operations and requested EMS meet the aircraft upon arrival. I sent an ACARS message to dispatch and informed them of an injured flight attendant. Because of the forecasted light to moderate turbulence reported at lower altitudes and the fact that we already had two medical doctors treating an injured flight attendant, I elected not to contact STAT MD. I was informed by the flight attendants that the injured flight attendant was stable and safely seated. I did not want to risk injuring another flight attendant during our descent into KFLL.

First Officer

Our flight departed late due to the aircraft arriving late from the previous station. During the flight we told the Flight Attendants to remain seated on climb out until they heard from us. Upon reaching cruise altitude, (FL380) and talking to ATC about the current turbulence, we told the Flight Attendants that they could get up with the smooth with occasional light chop. This flight condition stayed for most of the flight and we sat the Flight Attendants down twice as a precaution when we heard reports of greater than occasional light chop, or visually saw what looked like clouds with possible bumps along our route. At the time of the incident we had started our descent into KFLL out of FL380, and leveled at FL360. The seatbelt sign was on and the Flight Attendants were up with only occasional light chop. After leveling at FL360, the aircraft hit what felt like light wake turbulence and after a few minutes the Flight Attendants called and said one of the Flight Attendants had a broken ankle and was being treated by a doctor. At this point I was assigned by the Captain to take the ATC communication and the flight controls. The Captain coordinated with the Flight Attendants, KFLL Ops and Dispatch for our arrival in KFLL and requested medical staff to meet the aircraft. Upon arrival at KFLL, we kept the passengers seated while medical personnel boarded the aircraft and took command of the injured Flight Attendant.

'A' Flight Attendant

I walked to back to retrieve some C-folds and as I turned to walk back to the forward galley we hit turbulence and I saw both my Crewmates and a passenger who was exiting the lavatory fall and hit the floor. I heard the 'B' Flight Attendant scream and then realized she had broken her ankle because the bone was sticking out. I immediately went back to the front galley and made an announcement to the passengers to make them aware of the situation, ensure their compliance with remaining seated and covered the clear zone. I heard the 'C' Flight Attendant make an announcement for a medical doctor and there was one on board who helped us. While the 'C' Flight Attendant was handling the medical, I maintained the cabin; made sure other passengers were ok and stayed close to the clear zone while also communicating with the 'C' Flight Attendant and the pilots. We landed safely and were greeted by paramedics who took the 'B' Flight Attendant off the plane first. Passengers then deplaned.

'B' Flight Attendant

I was flying the B position and was in the aft galley cleaning when the flight deck made the announcement we were to begin our initial decent. There were also 3 passengers in the galley waiting to use the lavatory. Within 3 seconds of the initial decent announcement we had some severe and unexpected turbulence. It ended just as suddenly as it came. Everyone in the aft galley fell, my C Flight Attendant and the passengers. Somehow, my ankle bone ended up sticking out one direction and my foot was hanging the other direction. I could not move and just turned over and was hitting on the galley floor. One of the passengers in the back was a veterinarian and my C flight attendant called for a doctor on the PA. The 2 of those passengers tried to set my foot in a position and they used our wire splint and supplies to secure it as best as possible.

I was taken to Broward Hospital in FLL by the paramedics immediately upon landing. They found my ankle to be broken in several places and dislocated. They attempted a closed reduction on Thursday night which was unsuccessful. They subsequently scheduled me for surgery on Friday morning to do an open reduction. The doctors had to insert some plates and pins/screws to secure my ankle.

'C' Flight Attendant

We were on initial decent about 36 minutes out from landing in Fort Lauderdale, seatbelt sign had just been turned on and we made an announcement for everyone to please return to their seat. The 'B' Flight Attendant and I were in the aft galley getting ready to secure the galley for landing when the 'A' Flight Attendant came to the back looking for C-folds. I handed them to her and about that time a passenger was coming out of the lavatory and that's when we had a sharp jolt of turbulence that caused everyone in the back galley to fall. I was facing the 'B' Flight Attendant and as she fell I heard her scream out in pain. Seconds later she had straightened out her leg and I could see her ankle bone protruding out of her sock. The passenger who had fallen when coming out of the lavatory went to place her hands around the 'B' Flight Attendant ankle and I immediately stopped her. The passenger explained she was a vet and she was going to reset the bone- that it was necessary- she did just that and as soon as she did- the 'B' Flight Attendant stopped screaming. I then called for a medical doctor onboard and that's when a doctor from Rhode Island pressed his call light. I went over and explained my co-worker had broken her ankle and asked for his assistance. Meanwhile The 'A' Flight Attendant had walked up to the front of the aircraft to maintain the clear zone and made an announcement for the passengers to please remain seated, we had a medical situation onboard and we needed everyone's compliance and understanding until we landed.

I brought the doctor to the aft galley where the 'B' Flight Attendant was lying down with the veterinarian's hands close around her ankle to hold it in place. I then called the pilots to let them know the situation and to have paramedics arrive when we landed. I then made my way to the front to grab the first aid kit for the splints and helped the doctors stabilize the 'B' Flight Attendant's ankle. Once stabilized I moved passengers from the nearest back row and placed them in empty seats throughout the cabin so that we could have the 'B' Flight Attendant lay across the row with her ankle elevated until paramedics arrived. By this time we had begun our final descent. The 'A' Flight Attendant had managed to secure the entire cabin by herself for landing while I took down the doctors' information and secured the aft galley for landing. At some point (I can't remember when) the captain had called back to tell us the paramedics would be arriving to check on us and also see if we needed to be patched to STAT MD.

Southwest Airlines Co.

Erin Carroll
Manager Air Operations Investigations
Safety and Security
2702 Love Field Drive HDQ1SE
Dallas, TX 75235
[REDACTED]



I thanked him and updated him on what was going on in the cabin and told him that we had stabilized everything and I didn't think STAT MD was necessary because we already had things under control and were about to land anyways and the doctor we had onboard was outstanding. As soon as everything was secure, I walked up to the front and talked to the 'A' Flight Attendant about what first aid items needed to be replaced when we landed and that I would obviously be landing on the aft jumpseat since the 'B' Flight Attendant had been relieved of her flight attendant duties. We landed, taxied to the gate where we were immediately met by paramedics who came onboard and took the 'B' Flight Attendant and her personal affects to the hospital. Passengers were really understanding and compliant during the situation.

Thank you,

Erin Carroll
Manager Air Operations Investigations
Safety & Security
Southwest Airlines, CO