

NTSB Pilot Statement

FROM: CA Michael Hitchcock
E# [REDACTED]

DATE: February 23, 2016

RE: #476, PHX/MSP, 2/14/2016

Shortly prior to our planned top of descent at Flight Level (FL) 350, Minneapolis Center (ATC) gave us Pilots Discretion (PD) down to a lower altitude. Additionally, we were informed to expect light turbulence in the descent through flight level FL280. I immediately made a PA to the passengers that we would be starting our descent into Minneapolis and air traffic control had advised us to expect some light turbulence. I told the passengers we would land in about 25 minutes and to please make sure you are seated with your seat belts fastened.

Shortly after, the First Officer (FO), the pilot flying (PF), started his managed "Profile" descent. At approximately FL310, the nose began to lower to maintain the profile path, and as a result, the airspeed started increasing well beyond the planned descent speed. In an attempt not to allow an over-speed the FO & I simultaneously reduced the descent rate. This dual input disengaged the auto-pilot. Additionally, the FO deployed the speed brakes. Shortly after this, I received a call from a flight attendant (FA) informing me we now had a medical emergency. The nature of the emergency was that a passenger had "broken her leg while standing up to stretch."

I informed air traffic control of our medical emergency. ATC gave us a clearance direct to WASHY for runway 12L at Minneapolis. In the interim, I delegated the VHF number 1 radio to the FO and coordinated with the FA. I then called American Airlines Operations and requested paramedics met us at the gate. The FA advised they had a foot surgeon and two nurses working on the passenger. We landed within 20 minutes.

Of note: the seat belt sign had been on for most of the flight due to turbulence. To reiterate, an announcement regarding turbulence was by me and subsequently the FA made an and additional announcement prior to our descent to ensure all passengers were seated with their seat belts fastened...

Pilot Statement

FROM: FO Michael Craig
E# [REDACTED]

DATE: February 23, 2016

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As the pilot Flying (PF), I started a managed profile descent, but around FL310, the nose of the aircraft dipped downward and our speed increased. To avoid an over-speed, we pulled the nose up. I also deployed the speed brakes. We immediately got a call from the back saying we had a medical emergency; a passenger had broken her leg.

The captain declared a medical emergency and ATC gave us direct WASHY intersection for 12L. I flew the aircraft and spoke to ATC while the captain spoke to MSP Ops and the flight attendants. The captain requested Ops have paramedics meet us at gate.

This over-speed event happened suddenly and only lasted a few seconds and we landed within 20 minutes or so.

The seat belt sign was on for most of the flight due to intermittent turbulence. The captain made an announcement prior to descent and the flight attendant followed up a few minutes later to remind passengers to fasten their seat belts and remain seated.