

Crew Statements:**Captain, Welsey Heck:**

On Wednesday 09/13/2017 my crew and I were involved in accident between our aircraft a CRJ 200 (N261PS) and a tug located at the Charlotte Douglas International Airport. Below is my best recollection of what happened.

While taxiing to gate E4 in KCLT at approximately 3:45 Pm (19:45Z), we were rounding the north end of the E concourse at a normal/standard taxi speed. At the same time, a tug driver was coming in the opposite direction in the vehicle/tug road lane, which was off our left side behind gate E 35C and 38C. The issue arose at the intersection where this painted vehicle road way crosses the ramp/taxi line over to the extreme north end of the E concourse ramp.

As we approached this intersection, I only had a quick second to notice that the oncoming tug had seemingly begun a left turn directly in front of our left wing to cross the ramp. I looked backward out my side window to make sure the tug stopped in front of our wing tip, and that is when I saw that the driver did NOT stop. I immediately jumped on the brakes, trying to avoid a collision. At the same time, the driver of the tug looked up and finally saw the aircraft, and with a look of shock and terror on his face, tried to turn away from the wing of the aircraft. Unfortunately, the distance between my aircraft and this vehicle was too close and it was impossible for me to avoid a collision.

As soon as the accident occurred, I set the parking brake and called the ramp over the radio to inform them of what happened and to request immediate medical assistance. After that I made a brief passenger announcement asking everyone to stay seated. We then shut down the running right engine, and I had my flight attendant open the main cabin door so I could go outside and check on the tug driver. I also told my FO to call dispatch to inform them of what happened. Once outside I saw other ramp personnel trying to tend to the injured driver, and I realized just how bad the situation was. I then proceeded back onto the airplane to check on the safety and wellbeing of my passengers on board. Thankfully, everyone reported to be ok. Next, I called operations over the radio to check on the status/ETA of the medical personnel, and I was told they were moments away coming across the ramp. At that point, I had the flight attendant hand me the first aid kit and I went back outside to see if I could help in any way until EMS arrived.

Once help arrived for the tug driver, I was asked to shut down the APU and I asked about getting my 31 passengers off the airplane and into the terminal. Within a minute or two we were deplaning the passengers, and I shut down the APU and finished securing the airplane.

This is my best recollection of the events that transpired before, during, and after the accident. Thankfully, I discovered the tug driver will be ok, although injured fairly badly. Although this was an unfortunate accident, my crew and I did everything in our power to avoid the collision and to manage a situation over which we had very little control.

First Officer, Adam Wright:

I was the First Officer of Flight 5233 on 13 Sept 2017 when during taxi a ground vehicle (tug) struck our left wing at approximately 15:45L. Prior to the incident we had landed on Runway 18R and were issued

standard taxi in instructions from ATC to enter west ramp at E14 then taxi around the ramp to E concourse. At spot 24 the East ramp controller cleared us all the way to our assigned gate E4. Our aircraft was on the taxiway centerline at all times and I noted our taxi speed as normal and consistent with all other aircraft traffic on the ramp. At the time of impact we were just abeam E35 and on taxi centerline traveling west towards E4 gate. There were, of course, numerous tugs, carts, baggage trailers and associated ground vehicles moving in and around aircraft parked at the gate and there were vehicles traveling parallel to the taxiway outside our aircraft, a typical busy CLT ramp scene.

Moments prior to the incident I noticed, out of my peripheral vision, that the Captain shifted his body rapidly to look out his left window. The Captain's rapid movement caught my attention so I glanced over and saw, unbelievably, that a tug had turned directly towards our aircraft and entered the taxi lane! It then quickly disappeared from my view from the right seat. The Captain, realizing instantly, that the driver did not see our aircraft stood on the brakes as hard as he could in an attempt to avoid a collision. The aircraft was jerked violently to the left as the heavy vehicle struck our left wing.

Post impact, the Captain made an immediate call over the ramp frequency informing them that a vehicle had struck our aircraft and that we would require immediate medical assistance. Subsequently, the captain secured the aircraft and shut down the right engine (the only operating at the time). Additionally, a PA announcement was made to passengers informing them of the accident and to remain seated for the time being. The Captain then directed me to accomplish a shutdown checklist as he left the flight deck and opened the aircraft door in order to assess the situation. After determining that there was no need for immediate evacuation the Captain asked the passengers if anyone was hurt. At this time no person aboard the aircraft stated they were injured. I remained in the cockpit to coordinate with controllers and operations whilst the Captain and Flight Attendant cared for our passengers and the driver of the tug. After the outside scene was secured and ramp agents were available, we coordinated an orderly exiting of the passengers to the main terminal. I remained with the aircraft and helped in any way I could until it was towed clear.

Flight Attendant, Diane Philips

"While taxiing to the gate I was monitoring passengers to make sure their seat belts were on. It was approximately 1543 when I felt the aircraft shake really hard and bounce, felt the pilot slam on the brakes. I could not see outside because of where the jump seat is located. My first thoughts were are we ok, should we evacuate. I released myself out of my seat and told the passengers to remain seated and fasten seat belts. I went to 1A looked out the window for fire, debris, or smoke. That's when I saw the cart had made impact with the aircraft wing. At this time I have not had any contact with the flight crew.

I went back to the exit row to get a better view. I wanted to be able to update the flight crew on what has happened and what I can see. Once I got to Row 8, I saw a woman slumped over. I was looking out the exit window when the captain called and told me to open the main cabin door. I was confused but I complied. While walking to the main cabin door I was monitoring the cabin to make sure everyone was still okay. I went back to the front of the aircraft and opened the main cabin door. The captain went down the stairs and to the wing. I went to check on the passengers. They could not see what was going on outside. Nobody was sitting in 8A or 8C.

Passengers were saying they were going to miss their flight. I responded back there has been an accident. At this time I need everyone to remain seated and to remain clam. I went back to the front of the air plane. The captain came back on the plane and told me to get the first aid kit and I questioned myself, because in training they teach us that emergency equipment is not to leave the air craft unless it is the life pack AED. He told me to give it to him and I complied.

Once He came back he then told me that the woman was seriously injured. He said they were following the line to park and the cart driver was running parallel to them and he could not see her after she pasted his line of vision. After he told me this he went back down to talk to the safety patrol that meet our air craft.

At this time I went through the cabin to monitor passengers. I could not update them due to lack of information. Once I returned to the galley safety patrol asked me how many people were on the plane, I responded 31. At this time the Captain was in the galley talking to safety patrol. Safety Patrol was going over the protocol. Captain all of sudden started making an announcement. While doing his announcement I stop him, because he did not tell passenger to lower their window shades like the safety patrol asked. He then asked me if I was going to make the announcement. I responded yes, then completed task. At this time passengers were already grabbing their belongings. I told them to stay in line and to follow the person in front of them and do not stop. This guidance was given to me by safety patrol .The captain was helping with the deplaning. Once deplaning was completed the chief pilot asked if I was the flight attendant and I told him I was. He said I needed to call my inflight manger. That's when it hit me of what just happen. I had gotten the passengers off and then when I was left along I kind of dropped my guard. When I called Angie she said that Sheila was on her way out. I asked her to come too. I was waiting for Sheila to come to the air craft, at this point there were men talking to the flight crew. Once Sheila got to the scene, she was trying to find out if I could leave the scene. I was shortly then released. I was escorted into the airport. Once I was in the airport Sheila and Angie verified that I was ok to drive home. I was okay to drive home, but I was not fit for duty."