

NKS 1069 KCLE-KLAS 12/02/2008

Turbulence injury to Flight Attendant.

Capt. Andrew Nelson

Prior to descent into LAS, we were hearing radio chatter about the rough rides on the arrival. I asked the first officer to give the initial address to the passengers early (roughly 150 miles out) and also to advise the lead to have the FA take their seats. He made the PA and then use the inter phone to talk to the lead directly.

The ride was as advertised- continuous light, occasional moderate chop. We appeared to be passing through layers of stratiform clouds, no precipitation was visible on the radar. At roughly 23,000 feet we experienced a much larger than normal jolt of turbulence. It only lasted less than a second, but was quite abrupt. Shortly thereafter the lead FA called us and advised that our C FA had fallen, and thought she broke her ankle.

The FO called ahead to the station to request EMS meet us at the gate, while I continued the approach. Once at the gate we asked the passengers to remain seated while EMS used an aisle chair to get Ms Anderson into the jetway for treatment. After deplaning, our D FA, Coleen Horner rode with Vanessa to the hospital and stayed throughout treatment, even texting me an update late that night.

I phoned the CP to brief him. He advised I call the DSC, which I did to brief OCC on the event and pass along a report of the turbulence to the inbound crews. The airplane had generated a load 15 report which I noted in the logbook, and backed up with a call to MOC. Lastly, the local Tower had heard about an injured crew member from EMS and requested I contact them even as we were taxiing in. I contacted them and answered a few questions about the nature and location of the jolt, and my name, etc...

First Officer Thomas Littlefield

We were operating NKS1069 from CLE to LAS. We were handed off to LA Center as we approached LAS and were informed of "moderate" turbulence reports around FL190 during the descent into LAS. Upon receiving this information, I made an early descent PA to the passengers informing them of the turbulence reports and to double check the security of their seat belts. I then proceeded to tell the lead F/A about the turbulence reports and to wrap up the service early and go ahead and take their seats. I estimate our altitude at that time to be around FL260. The seat belt sign was turned on and we encountered "moderate" turbulence somewhere in the low FL20s. The turbulence lasted for approximately 15-20 seconds. Shortly after exiting the turbulence, the lead F/A called to inform us that one of the F/As in the back said she "broke her leg". I called up LAS ops and informed them of the situation and to have the paramedics meet us at the gate. We continued for a normal landing and proceeded to the gate. The paramedics were at the gate and we had all the passengers remain seated as the paramedics tended to and carted the injured F/A off the aircraft.

A Flight Attendant Eric Lemite

During decent we were getting the cabin ready for landing. FA C was on her way to jumpseat from doing compliance check, when we experienced severe turbulence. That's when FA C got injured. FA B called me and informed me of FA C injury, that's when I called the captain and let him know. EMS was there when we landed.

B Flight Attendant Emily Soza

After the announcement for initial descent my flight attendant (Vanessa Anderson) and I were locking up the galley when we hit a case of extremely severe turbulence. The turbulence was so sudden that we did not have time to make it to our jump seats. Vanessa's jump seat was locked up due to us securing the galley. She was holding on to the overhead bin handles trying to get into seat 31D to secure herself. I held onto the top of the bulkhead and handle to the right of the R2 door. About a minute or two of bracing and holding onto whatever we could we hit an air pocket and dropped. As we were dropping, I vividly remember lifting off of the ground and then landing very hard on my knees. As soon as I landed I looked up to check on Vanessa and saw her on her back hollering in pain that she had broken her ankle. As soon as the turbulence calmed down enough for me to contain my composure I slid over to her and held onto her from behind so she wouldn't hit her head on the seats or any corners around and to calm her down. Two passengers sitting nearby who were securely fastened in their seats held onto her arms so I could crawl over to the L2 phone and call the front. I told our lead (Eric Lemite) that Vanessa was down in the aisle, she had broken her ankle, and that we need an ambulance as soon as we arrived at the gate. Once I got her into seat 31c which was open, our chaser Colleen and I swapped places so I could get her ice for her ankle. As soon as I made it to the front galley the turbulence started acting up again, it was bad enough to prevent us from switching back safely. So I remained in her jumpseat until we landed safely and were able to switch after deplaning.

C Flight Attendant Vanessa Anderson

There had been slight to moderate turbulence at the beginning of our flight, so we decided to stay seated and called Eric that we were going to remain in our jumpseats until the seatbelt sign came off. We did that and everything was fine. When we were getting ready to do our second service, it started getting turbulent again. I asked Emily to please call the captain to turn on the fasten seatbelt sign. As she grabbed for the phone the seatbelt sign came on. We waited for just a bit and then completed second service when the turbulence stopped.

After Initial announcement, I was in the back galley with Emily when we started to feel moderate turbulence. We immediately put away the final items from the galley and made sure that the atlases were secure so we could sit down in our jump seats. Emily was holding onto the assist handle in the aft galley while holding onto a bottle of handsanitizer and a water bottle (the last two items to put away. I was just about to unhook my jumpseat and swivel it around so that we could take our jumpseats. The turbulence got worse. I told Emily, just take your seat! Meanwhile, I was in the galley & grabbed onto the backs of seats 31C & 31D and held on tight and braced my feet about 12 inches apart. I was just

trying to hold on until it was safe for me to take a step to get into one of those seats 31C-D to seatbelt myself. Emily was hanging on tight to the assist handle in the galley as she was also unable to make it to her seat because it was so turbulent. Passengers were screaming, but were all seated and belted in. In front of me, Colleen had made it about half way, maybe by the exit rows and she was hanging on as tight as she could to the backs of the seats. I was just about to yell to her to sit in a passengers lap, when we felt the aircraft suddenly drop. I went up in the air to the ceiling and then slammed down hard to the ground in between the galley and seats 31 C-D. All 4 FA's flew up and then slammed down. Passengers were screaming even more.

When I slammed down to the floor, it felt like my left leg bent behind me at the knee and my ankle hit the floor, HARD! I was in immediate intense pain and started screaming and crying. Emily had fell to the floor and scooted over to me and grabbed my head and put it into her lap to keep my head from hitting the floor during the turbulence.

Emily called up front to have Eric call the CA and medlink. When the turbulence stopped, Emily ran up front to grab some ice to put onto my ankle. Colleen immediately switched Emily and came to the back with me. Colleen was still mid-cabin. She had said that when she was lifted off the ground, she landed in a squatting position on the floor and hurt her knee.

The passenger sitting in 30A jumped over the seats to row 31 in order to help assist me up off of the floor, along with the passenger seated in 30D. After I was seated in row 31ABC, Colleen thanked them and told them to return to their seats and buckle up. Colleen propped up my leg and tried to apply ice. I screamed out in pain and was still crying from the pain. I was unable to handle any type of pressure from below such as my foot or above from my toes to my knee.

A medical assistant from seat 29C came to assist. She asked me to wiggle my toes. I was able to slightly. Then she asked my to try to bend my toes. I screamed out in severe pain. Colleen thanked her then told her to get seated and belted in as we were about to land. I started to have more pain in my lower back and left hip. I moved across to the other row for landing 31DEF. We had to lift my leg up from just under my knee as it was too painful anywhere else.

Colleen took the FA B jumpseat for landing and disarmed both aft doors for the all call. She had made sure my buckle was on because I was in too much pain to even realize that I had never buckled it.

EMS arrived and used an isle chair to remove me from the aircraft. They started an IV and gave me morphine right there in the jet bridge. Gate B20 in LAS. Colleen came with me in the ambulance and stayed at the hospital. Supervisor Desmond was in the jetbridge and tried to talk to me, but I was in way too much pain. I have no idea what he said, something about email.

At about 8:10pm, I was at Sunrise Hospital ER. They gave me Dilaudid for pain, Zofran for nausea, Ativan for anxiety, and Fentanyl for pain. They took x-rays and said that my Fibula bone was broken and they would need to reset it. The doctor also said that I probably tore ligaments and tendons as well and to see an orthopedic surgeon as soon as possible when I get home to OKC. I also told the doctor that in

addition to my ankle hurting, my neck, lower back, knees, and elbows hurt. He gave me a prescription for hydrocodone & IBU.

Note: At no time did the CA make any type of PA about turbulence or say anything Offer the PA, like instructing to FA's to take their jumpseats. I assume that he was busy trying to get through all the rough air.

D Flight Attendant Colleen Horner

Upon initial decent, we experienced extremely severe turbulence. Lead FA made premature final decent announcement (during the time of initial phase of flight) while seatbelt sign was not yet illuminated. As we prepared the cabin and ourselves for landing, a slight jolt shook us about the cabin. Seatbelt sign was illuminated as I made my way back toward AC FWD, and FA B and C continued to wrap up the AFT galley. I got midcabin, about row 19, and firmly planted my feet, holding the seatbacks, as I had to stay still to keep balance and not lose my footing. I'm assuming we encountered an air pocket as we (myself, Emily, Vanessa) were thrown from the floor toward the ceiling. I landed on my feet and into a full, deep, squatted position. I heard a scream from the back of the aircraft and turned to see Emily Soza and Vanessa Anderson #70142 on the floor of the cabin/aft galley. I went to balance myself enough to take a PAX seat and my right knee caved, forcing me to the floor of the aircraft again. I landed on my knee before being able to take the available seat. When I felt safe enough to get up, I went to the back of the plane to help Vanessa as I saw Emily had slid her body under Vanessa's head to prevent her any further injury. Vanessa was seemingly in excruciating pain, letting out another piercing scream and struggling to access a seat. Upon landing, EMS boarded the plane and assisted Vanessa off in a wheelchair.