
December 7, 2018

John Lovell
Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

RE: Southwest Airlines Flight 278 Dispatcher Statement

John,

Per your request, please find below the statement from the Dispatcher involved in the aircraft accident at Bob Hope Airport (KBUR) on December 6, 2018.

On December 6, 2018, I was working Desk 61. The desk handles OAK departures to the North, East and South, with much of the departures to the Southern California (SoCal) area. The LA Basin and SAN areas were experiencing VCSH all morning long, moving primarily from the Southwest to the Northeast, with frequent pockets of convective activity throughout the area. The convective activity might be impacting one or two airports in the area, while others might be experiencing only -RA and no significant other weather. A short time later, those same pockets of convective activity might have moved along, no longer impacting the previously affected airports, but now affecting other airports in the SoCal area.

I had planned alternates for all of the SoCal destinations, using both LAS and ONT as alternates. I didn't trust ONT's weather to name it as a stand-alone alternate due to the VCSH in the area, so I named the primary alternate as LAS which had better weather; ONT was named as a secondary alternate, being possibly usable should a weather diversion occur and it being clear of any significant weather at a time of diversion. In and around the late 1600z to early 1700z hours, I was dealing with the aforementioned weather, sending other flight Releases, dealing with MEL issues, and having a diversion discussion with the crew of an aircraft that had just missed their approach into LGB due to weather. Early in the 1700z hour, I received an internal intercom call (I don't think that the caller identified himself, and I didn't recognize the voice, but the call was from within the NOC) asking me if I was aware of any issues with Flight #278 in BUR, specifically relating to a possible runway incident; in which I replied that I had not. While on the same intercom call, and within seconds, my telephone immediately rings and I answer it.

It happened to be the Captain of #278 who began to tell me of his situation. I told him that I had just been apprised of the possibility of something going on in BUR, but that his phone call to me was the first real conversation and confirmation of an incident. I then patched us in with the Chief Pilot and the three of us discussed the situation. At around this timeframe, I diverted the LGB bound aircraft to ONT and started working the diversion recovery flight when I was subsequently pulled from my desk due to the BUR incident.

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Thank you,

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