

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety
Washington, D.C. 20594

July 9, 2020

Attachment 1 –Crew Statements

OPERATIONAL FACTORS/HUMAN PERFORMANCE

DCA20CA043

REPORT ON AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 2247 – TURBULENCE ENCOUNTER

FLIGHT: AA2247

AIRCRAFT: E190

ROUTE: LGA-RDU

DATE: DECEMBER 18TH, 2019

CAPTAIN: [REDACTED] – Pilot Monitoring

F/O: [REDACTED] – Pilot Flying

FA1: [REDACTED] #1

FA2: [REDACTED] #2

AA Flight 2247 departed LGA for RDU on time at 9:58am with the first officer assigned Pilot Flying (PF) duties and myself (Captain) as Pilot Monitoring (PM). The Flight was filed at FL180 due to a strong jetstream headwind at high altitudes. However, ATC assigned us a cruise altitude at FL200. Climb and initial cruise at FL200 was very smooth in clear skies. ATC reported FL200 smooth “no complaints” from other aircraft, so the seatbelt sign was off and flight attendants conducted their inflight service. About an hour into the flight, at approximately 1600Z, we encountered a brief duration of “light to moderate” chop at FL200, which I associated with the bottom of the jetstream. I turned the Seat Belt sign ON and requested a descent to FL180. Given the clear skies, smooth ride and no PIREP reports of turbulence, the seat belt sign was again turned OFF at FL180. At approximately 1615Z, south of RIC near HPW, we encountered an unexpected clear air turbulence (CAT) event at FL180 lasting for approximately one minute or less. I would classify the turbulence as nothing more than “light to moderate” chop. The sky was clear from LGA to RDU (no clouds along our route). We received no reports from ATC or other aircraft in the area for any turbulence, as well as no reports from AA Dispatch. No TAPS reports on the WSI app either. There was also no reported traffic in the area, and we immediately checked TCAS after the CAT event, as my initial suspicion was wake turbulence because of the very short duration of the chop, and there was no traffic on our TCAS display near our position or reported by ATC. So, the event was most likely CAT.

The flight was very smooth the majority of the time except for the two “light to moderate” chop encounters both lasting for very short durations (one at FL200 and one at FL180)

Immediately following the turbulence encounter at FL180, we received an interphone call from the cabin advising us that a flight attendant hurt their leg/foot during the turbulence when they were returning to their seat. Upon receiving this information, the First officer remained Pilot Flying and communicated with ATC, and I began the inflight medical procedure and contacting American Airlines dispatch / RDU ops. We also checked for an onboard doctor or medical professional, but there were none. A deadheading/non-rev pilot helped take care of the injured Flight Attendant by stabilizing her leg and applying ice. Once we received detailed information from the Cabin that the flight attendant seemed to be severely injured, we declared a medical emergency with ATC, and were cleared to the Final Approach Fix for RW23R in RDU.

After landing in RDU we were cleared by RDU Ramp control to the gate where paramedics met the aircraft and removed the injured FA

Report submitted by – Captain [REDACTED]

NTSB statement concerning In-flight injury to flight attendant on AA2247

Weather conditions in the days leading up to the event had been a long stationary front extending the full length of the east coast producing a band of rain for two days. A cold air mass finally pushed through creating a high-pressure system in the area on the day of the event. Visibility was unlimited and no clouds were present. Winds at higher altitudes above 25,000 ft were from the southwest at near 100 knots, so we were filed lower likely to avoid the high headwinds. I believe we were generally somewhere in the range of 50 knot headwinds at our altitude. I do not recall any other aircraft nearby that we were following or passed overhead to cause any potential wake turbulence.

En route from LGA to RDU on AA Flight 2247, 18DEC19, our initial ATC assigned altitude was FL200 and was smooth for quite some time until we encountered a brief area of light to moderate chop and requested to descend lower for a smoother ride. Once at FL180, we had been in smooth air for 8 to 10 minutes, until our aircraft encountered a pocket of moderate clear air turbulence just south of an area near Richmond, VA. The turbulence was unexpected due to lack of any reports by ATC or PIREPS by other aircraft. Conditions prior to and after the event were generally smooth. The turbulence lasted for about 15 to 20 seconds. Following the event, the captain received a call from the cabin stating that flight attendant #1 had been injured, potentially breaking an ankle. I am unaware of the status of the seatbelt sign since the captain normally turns it on and off. I continued flying while the captain coordinated with the FAs, AA dispatch, and Ops in RDU. I have little knowledge of the conversations, except what was relayed to me by the captain of his conversation with the second flight attendant because I was maintaining control of the aircraft and did not have the cabin radio interconnection selected. We also declared a medical emergency and landed in RDU where we were met by EMS and ops management.

First Officer [REDACTED]

On Dec 18, 2019, I was flying space available on AA flight 2247. Approximately 30 minutes from arrival, the flight experienced a moderate to severe turbulence event. Quickly following the event, the forward flight attendant ran to the aft galley of aircraft. The flight attendant, who had run aft, used the intercom to inquire if anyone on board was a doctor. I maintained my seat to keep the aisle clear and wait to see if a doctor responded. Another pilot traveling out of uniform moved aft and I followed him. As I approached the aft galley a passenger took control of the situation. This passenger seemed to have assessed the situation and was administering first aid to the flight attendant who was manning the aft galley. I asked if I could do anything. The other pilot stated that we needed to splint her leg. I found two coat hangers in the forward closet and gave them to the other pilot who was assisting in first aid. I asked if I could assist. I was asked to man the front galley to prevent any attempted entry into the cockpit. I sat at the forward FA jumpseat until I was relieved by the flight attendant. Prior to the turbulence that potentially led to the injury, I do not recall anything more than occasional light turbulence. The turbulence event was isolated and we did not experience any turbulence of that magnitude prior or after the event that led to a potential injury of our flight attendant.

AA Pilot

I was a non-rev during the flight. About half way or more we hit turbulence for a few seconds. I heard a scream from back of airplane and turned to look. I saw someone sitting on the floor in pain. I got up, walked back, and saw it was the "A" FA in a lot of pain and crying. She told me that the turbulence made her airborne and when she landed, she believed her foot to be broken. The "B" FA was behind her and we got ice in a bag and put it on her foot. The "B" flight attendant made a call for any medical persons on board to assist. At this point, the "A" FA was saying she was feeling dizzy and might pass out. I told the "B" FA to tell Captain we needed to get on the ground. We had one passenger respond to the request for medical assistance. She came back and held the "A" FA foot while I went forward to see what I had to stabilize the foot. I was given hangers so I took my phone charger to wrap her ankle. There was another non-rev pilot who was given the job to sit in the front jumpseat to secure the cockpit door. I went back and between the passenger and myself, we got the flight attendants foot wrapped and bag of ice on top secured. The flight attendant was then seated in the last row and feet buckled, so her legs would not bounce around. I sat in the seat across the aisle and the passenger returned to her seat. The "B" flight attendant did final checks and sat in the front jumpseat. I sat in the rear jumpseat before landing until arrival at the gate. Emergency services removed her from the airplane.

████████████████████ Captain (Seat 2A)

Kevin Burrows/#2 Flight Attendant

CERS Report:

FA 01 was walking to the back of the aircraft doing credit cards when open-air turbulence hit. I was in the front galley; she was near the aft galley. All of a sudden, I hear screaming from the back. I look back and she is on the floor screaming for help. I run to the back and she's screaming, "I broke my leg!" I call for medical personnel on board, and there was not any. I then call the CA and we communicate what needs to happen next. There is no phone on the e190 (???) to call POC. My tablet phone also did not work. I asked two non-rev pilots to help me.

1 (Madison Woo, seat 8A, employee number 762518) protected the flight deck while I was in the back galley.

2 (Mark Dorsey, seat 2A) helped me with FA 01, assisting with keeping her calm and icing her foot.

Also, passenger Heather Finch (seat 23F) helped with stabilizing the foot and wrapping it.

The 01 seemed to be in and out of it. I got her to a passenger seat, elevated her foot, and fastened her seat belt. I then prepared the cabin for landing and sat in the forward JS. EMT met the flight and took the 01 off in a stretcher.