



Internal Memorandum

Date: 8/17/2022

To: Captain Brian J. Cink, Regional Director & Chief Pilot – LAX CPO
From: First Officer Nicholas R. Rochelle
Subject: II22-104: Aircraft Damage – Tail Strike at KATL
DL1696 06AUG22 FLL-ATL N540US B757-251 (5640)
CAP: GAMBLIN, D.L.; **FO:** ROCHELLE, N.R.

This statement is provided at the request of the Chief Pilot's Office.

I was First Officer of Delta Air Lines Flight 1696 from FLL-ATL on 06AUG22.

At approximately 2130L in ATL, while on the third leg of my first 7ER Operational Experience (OE) rotation, the Captain and I were directed to hold while on the STAR due to thunderstorms and microbursts in the vicinity of the airport. These storms forced the airport closed, and the arrival direction to be changed twice. We were finally cleared to the airport, and I performed my first landing in the B-757-200.

During final approach to landing, I met stable approach criteria at 1000 ft AGL, and began hand-flying the aircraft at about 400-500 ft AGL. The Tower was not calling any gust, and so the normal Vref additive was set at 5 kts.

During the approach, I got a little high and a little fast after transitioning to visual references (~100-150 ft AGL), approximately a dot and a half high on the PAPI, but I assessed I could still make a safe landing in the touchdown zone, so I continued for landing.

After touching down in the touchdown zone, the speed brakes deployed. Instead of gradually lowering the nose, I applied too much continuous aft pressure on the yolk, which lifted the plane back off the ground.

At this point, the Captain directed a "Go-Around" and we executed the Go-Around procedure. During this maneuver, the Captain assumed the Pilot Flying role, we ran all applicable checklists, re-briefed, and received vectors to an uneventful landing on runway 10.

Neither of us felt anything that would indicate a tail strike/scrape, so we did not contact maintenance or perform any logbook writeups. We continued the rotation and flew the next leg to ORF on a different aircraft where I landed uneventfully and proceeded to the layover hotel.

The next day in ORF, I noticed I was removed from the rotation and deadheading home. After talking to the Captain, I learned that we had scraped the tail in ATL, but due to the thunderstorms, nobody had looked at the aircraft until about 5 hours later. We had flown our next leg to ORF without knowing there was any damage to our previous aircraft.

I acknowledge release of this statement to [Delta Flight Safety](#) and to the [National Transportation Safety Board \(NTSB\)](#).

Regards,

First Officer Nicholas R. Rochelle
Employee # [REDACTED]
(Signature on file)