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March 27, 2025

Daniel Bower
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RE: Southwest Airlines Flight 3278 Flight Crew Statements

Dan,

Per your request, please find below the statements from the Flight Crew involved in the rejected takeoff from taxiway event on March 20, 2025.

Captain

I was the Captain on SWA Flight 3278 (MCO-ALB) on March 20, 2025. The event flight was leg two on the first day of a 4-day pairing with the First Officer (FO). Our first leg was ATL-MCO where the FO was pilot flying (PF) and I was the pilot monitoring (PM). The flight to MCO was uneventful. The FO and I had flown together before and we had good rapport.

The event flight started with standard company briefings. Since I was the PF, I briefed the SID, engine out procedure and planned taxi route, and noted the partial closure of taxiway Golf and H1, that was indicated on the NOTAM as closed. The FO informed me that we would most likely get H2 as an intersection departure and we ran the numbers in our Performance Weight and Balance (PWB) via ACARS for the intersection departure. The passengers and Flight Attendants (FA's) were briefed and we completed the Before Start and the Before Push checklists for an on-time departure. Although I do not recall the specifics of the ATIS in detail, it was day VFR.

Before taxiing out, I had ownship displayed on the JeppPro App with AMM selected on my EFB. The FO notified ground control with an advisory call and we pushed from Gate 103 and started both engines. Taxiing out from Gate 103, we were given instructions to taxi to runway 17R, H2 via the ramp and at H2 to contact the Tower. When we were abeam of Gate 120 we encountered an aircraft that had pushed back from the gate and was starting its engines. There wasn't enough room for us to comfortably taxi around that aircraft, so we held short and notified Tower of our position. The ramp portion of taxiways G and H1 were closed due to construction. Men and equipment were present and working on taxiway H1 and a portion of taxiway G. We completed the Before Takeoff checklist while we waited for the aircraft that was blocking our taxi out. After the aircraft taxied, we were then given instructions to taxi to Runway 17R via H2. The Tower then cleared us for takeoff while we were still on the ramp. I checked final and said to the FO "final is clear 17R verified." I was looking at the 17R red runway sign when I said 17R is verified, but we had not yet taxied onto the runway. As we were approaching the runway, I asked the FO to confirm we had completed the Before Takeoff checklist. The FO looked up on the overheard panel for any lights, didn't see any and confirmed the checklist was complete.

After taxiing past taxiway G, I mistakenly turned right onto taxiway H, thinking that it was the runway. With the engine spooled from taxi power and before I finished the right turn, I announced that I was setting takeoff thrust and selected TOGA, while advancing the thrust levers. The aircraft wasn't centered on the runway and I applied rudder to maintain the centerline. Maintaining the centerline required my full attention and I didn't notice we were on a taxiway until the Tower and my FO both directed me to reject the takeoff because we were on a taxiway. I stopped the aircraft straight ahead, using normal manual braking, maintaining centerline and disconnecting the auto-throttle. We exited the taxiway at H3. After turning right off taxiway H we brought the aircraft to a stop. We asked ground control for a place to run a brake cooling check and ground told us to hold short of G1 on the Golf taxiway. We held short and ran the brake cooling check, using 75knots as the abort speed, and 153,000lbs. The PWB directed us to wait 30 minutes before returning to the gate,

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and noted that maintenance was required, no limitations exceeded. I notified the passengers that we had rejected the take off due to an indication in the cockpit, that we would have to return to the gate to have the brakes inspected, and that we would have to wait until the brakes cooled before returning to the gate. At the completion of the brake cooling module, the FO started the timer. I believe there were 18 minutes left when I told the passengers how long we would be waiting for the brakes to cool. We notified dispatch via ACARS, and contacted maintenance and operations. I notified the FA's that we were heading back to the gate.

After the 30 minutes elapsed, we taxied back to the gate. We completed the shutdown checklist. Maintenance met us there. I wrote up the rejected take off in the maintenance logbook and answered maintenance questions, regarding speed, weight, temperature and pressure altitude. I called dispatch and asked to be connected to the NOC Chief Pilot. He was on another call, so the dispatcher asked if I could do a three way conference call with maintenance. Since maintenance was already there and I was trying to coordinate with the ops agent, passengers and FA's, I said I would call back. After speaking with maintenance, I notified the passengers and FA's that maintenance had to inspect the brakes and we would let them know what was going to happen next once we had an update. The Chief Pilot met us on the jet bridge to see if we needed assistance. At that point, the FO and I both left the aircraft, with ground air and power hooked up, APU off and IRS's off. We were provided with an office inside the terminal from which I contacted dispatch and the NOC Chief Pilot.

First Officer

I was the First Officer on SWA Flight 3278 (MCO-ALB) on March 20, 2025. This was the second leg of the first day of a 4 day trip.

On the previous leg (ATL-MCO), as the pilot flying (PF), during cruise, I read the ATIS and noticed multiple taxiway closures at MCO. I marked those in red on my AMM and during my pre-approach briefing, I noted the closures to the Captain and we discussed taxi-in possibilities: If ground brought us in on Juliet from the west, we could expect J3. If from the south, we needed to be aware of Golf being closed north of H2 to J5, as well as H1. We also briefed the possibility of using G1 or H2 all the way around AIRSIDE 2 to park at gate 103.

During our taxi in at MCO, we heard ground control tell two flights to expect Runway 17R-H2. Captain and I both agreed this could be a possibility for our departure to Albany.

At the gate, I received the ATIS for the MCO-ALB flight and realized that it did not state 17R- H2 intersection for departure. Weather was VFR. I put 17R-H2 in as the 1st option on our PWB request, followed by full length 17R and 18L. I told the Captain how I had set it up. Upon receipt of CPDLC, it showed us to expect 17R if departing south, without mention of intersection H2. Since Captain was the pilot flying, he briefed the required items, including the closed taxiways, on AMM, and we agreed that H2 was the best possibility. We received our PWB data, accomplished the Before Pushback checklist, and were ready to leave the gate a few minutes before the scheduled departure time.

I called ground for pushback, and, as cleared on our discretion, we began the pushback. I started both engines, and after we finished the Before Taxi checklist, I noted clear right and called for a taxi clearance.

Ground control told us to expect 17R H2 for takeoff, and cleared us to taxi via the ramp to H2. On taxi out, I verified the tower frequency with ground and switched over as cleared. As we taxied on the ramp, Captain gave the flight attendant the single chime signal and called for the Before Takeoff checklist. I heard the "A" flight attendant announcement, turned off the volume switch and proceeded to run the Before Takeoff checklist. As we approached H2, still on the ramp, we noticed a SWA MAX8 had pushed back and was perpendicular to our position. I told the Captain that it didn't look like we had room to taxi past it. He agreed, and I notified Tower. They advised us to state when we would be able to taxi. At this point, our expectation was that we would be cleared to taxi onto H2 after the SWA MAX8 moved. Since we were on tower frequency, we could not hear the MAX8 communications with ground. The SWA MAX made a right turn away from us and I advised the Captain that we were clear. He asked me to call Tower, which I did. While holding short of H2 on the ramp,

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Tower cleared us for takeoff on 17R-H2, RNAV to KAAPE. I acknowledged the clearance, although I thought it was a bit premature to receive the clearance since we were still on the ramp. As I responded to the clearance, I looked on the FMC to verify KAAPE and looked at the FMA to verify LNAV. I then advised the Captain that we were cleared for takeoff 17R-H2, RNAV to KAAPE, and that FMA showed LNAV.

We then began taxiing. The Captain turned onto H2, and as we were crossing the Golf taxiway he stated that the final approach was clear and that 17R-H2 was verified. I saw the 17R-H2 sign and saw that we were taxiing toward 17R. I looked to the left to ensure that there were no aircraft on short final to runway 17R, and then looked at the TCAS. I noticed a "+02" on the TCAS. To make sure we were clear, I looked outside again and saw a SWA aircraft landing on runway 17L. The Captain then asked me if we had completed the Before Takeoff checklist. I took a moment to recall that I had heard the flight attendant PA and that I had pushed the recall button. I told the Captain that we had completed the checklist. However, to be certain that we had completed the checklist, I scanned the overhead panel. At this point, the aircraft was still on H2, approaching Hotel, headed for runway 17R. As I was finishing my scan of the panel, I felt the aircraft turning. The captain stated that we were "spooled up" (meaning 40% N1), he pushed the TOGA switches, and he then said "set takeoff thrust". I felt the aircraft turn to the right and heard the engines spool up. I momentarily looked down, saw the thrust levers moving up, but I didn't wait to verify the thrust. I looked outside the aircraft and realized that we were on a taxiway. I was startled when I saw this and it took a few seconds for me to vocalize "we are on the taxiway-reject." At about the same time, the Tower called and said, Southwest 3278, you are on a taxiway, reject takeoff. At this point, I reiterated that we were on a taxiway and to reject the takeoff. Subsequently, I acknowledged the Tower instruction. The Captain responded by rejecting the takeoff and applying the brakes.

The Captain slowed the aircraft and turned off onto the taxiway at H3. I do not remember the maximum aircraft speed, but since Captain rejected quickly, I assume we had not exceeded 80 kts. The Captain made a PA asking the passengers to stay seated and advised the flight attendants of the rejected takeoff. The Captain asked me to run the brake cooling PWB data. It stated that we had to wait 30 minutes before returning to the gate. Tower wanted to know if we were returning for takeoff, as they advised an aircraft to wait to follow us. We stated that we would head back to the gate after our brake cooling time. After we waited for the brakes to cool, we taxied back to the terminal. We secured the aircraft and completed the shutdown checklist. The Captain then notified dispatch, spoke to maintenance and made an aircraft logbook entry about the rejected take-off. The MCO chief pilot met us in the jet bridge, offered his assistance to us and we both left the aircraft and followed the notification process outlined in Chapter 22 of the Flight Operations Manual (FOM).

Thank you,

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