



AIC Head Office,
Level 1, NAQIA Haus, Portion 81, Moera Tobo Rd, 6 Mile
PO Box 1709, Boroko 111
National Capital District
Papua New Guinea

Telephone : (675) 323 2911
Facsimile : (675) 323 2139
Email : hnamani@aic.gov.pg

Safety recommendation: AIC 19-R03/18-1004

Addressed to: Air Niugini Limited

Date issued: 4 February 2019

Investigation link: TC&I 18-1001 (AIC 18-1004)

Action status: Issued

Introduction

On 28 September 2018, the Federated States of Micronesia, Department of Transportation, Communications and Infrastructure (DTC&I) was notified of the aircraft accident referenced in this safety recommendation. DTC&I commenced an investigation and deployed investigators to Chuuk and invited the Papua New Guinea Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) to join the investigation in the capacity of the State of Registry and also a State providing experts and facilities for the investigation. The AIC team is comprised of an Accredited Representative and Technical Advisers. The US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) as the State of Manufacture of the aircraft and in response to FSM National Government's request for assistance also sent a team comprised of an Accredited Representative and Technical Advisers from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Boeing. Technical Advisers from the US National Weather Service are assisting the US Accredited Representative.

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSBC) as the State of Manufacture of specific components appointed an Accredited Representative and Technical Advisers to download the data from the AFIRS.

The PNG AIC has identified a significant safety deficiency, which if not rectified could result in injury or loss of life following an accident. The FSM DTC&I investigator in charge supports the PNG AIC issuing this safety recommendation.

Occurrence

On Friday 28 September 2018, a Boeing 737-8BK aircraft, registered P2-PXE, was being operated by Air Niugini Limited, on a scheduled passenger flight from Pohnpei to Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia.

At 23:17:19 UTC1 (09:17:19 local time) the aircraft impacted the water of Chuuk Lagoon about 1,443 ft (440 m) short of the runway 04 threshold, during its approach to runway 04 at Chuuk International Airport. As the aircraft settled in the water, it turned clockwise through 210° and drifted 460 ft (140 m) south east of the runway 04 extended centreline, with the nose of the aircraft pointing about 265°.

¹ The 24-hour clock, in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), is used in this report to describe the local time as specific events occurred. Local time in the area of the accident, Pacific/Chuuk Time is UTC + 10 hours.

There were 12 crew members and 35 passengers on board. Six passengers were seriously injured, and one passenger was fatally injured.

The 12 crew members and 34 passengers exited the aircraft and were promptly rescued and brought to shore by U.S. Navy divers (who were the first on scene), Chuuk State Government boats, Red Cross, Transco, and more than twenty privately-owned boats. Local divers located the fatally injured passenger in the aircraft 3 days after the accident.

Safety deficiency description

The AIC's investigation team has been reviewing video footage taken during the ditching evacuation of P2-PXE at Chuuk and has noted with concern that there were many instances of non-compliance with evacuation directives prohibiting baggage, including hand baggage, being removed from the aircraft during the evacuation.

This non-compliance includes a cabin crew member taking a uniform issued hand-bag from the front of the aircraft, through the cabin to the right over wing exit. Likewise, the load master carried a backpack off the aircraft.

Furthermore, cabin crew did not address the non-compliance by passengers, resulting in many passengers taking bags off the aircraft. There are two notable instances where the removal of baggage slowed the egress. One further instance where a passenger, an Australian citizen, had egressed the aircraft with cabin baggage (a backpack) and was allowed to re-enter the aircraft and move forward to retrieve his shoes.

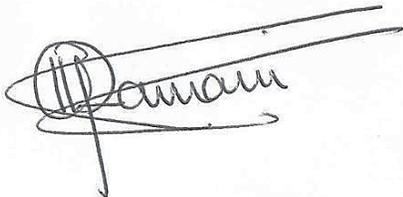
Recommendation number AIC 18-R03/18-1004 to Air Niugini Limited

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission recommends that Air Niugini Limited, as a matter of urgency:

- (a) should ensure that all crew members are reminded of their obligation to comply with *PNG Civil Aviation Rules*, the *Air Niugini Special Emergency Procedures (SEP)*, and the *Air Niugini Corporate Emergency Response Manual*, in particular Section 6.9.3; and
- (b) should ensure all crew members are reminded of their obligation to ensure that passengers do not take any baggage from the aircraft.

Action requested

The AIC requests that Air Niugini Limited note recommendation *AIC 19-R03/18-1004*, and provide a response to the AIC as soon as possible, but no later than 1 May 2019 (within 90 days of the issue date), and explain (including with evidence) how Air Niugini Limited has addressed the safety deficiency identified in the safety recommendation.



HUBERT NAMANI, LLB
Chief Commissioner

4 February 2019

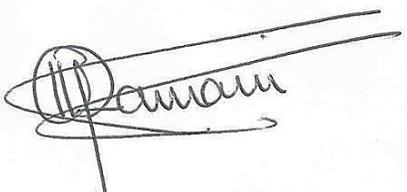
Air Niugini Safety Action

On 18 February 2019, Air Niugini Limited informed the PNG Accident Investigation Commission of its safety actions to address the safety deficiencies identified in *Safety Recommendation AIC 19-R03/18-1004*. Air Niugini also provided documentary evidence of the safety action taken.

PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) assessment of Air Niugini Limited response

The AIC has reviewed the Air Niugini Limited documents providing evidence to the AIC of the safety action taken. The AIC is satisfied that the evidence satisfactorily addresses the safety deficiencies identified in the AIC *Safety Recommendation AIC 19-R03/18-1004*.

The AIC has assigned the Air Niugini Limited response a *fully satisfactory* rating, and records the **Status of the AIC Recommendation: Closed Response Accepted**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hubert Namani', is written over a light grey rectangular background. The signature is stylized and includes a large circular flourish at the beginning.

HUBERT NAMANI, LLB
Chief Commissioner

18 February 2019