

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD OF CANADA

Aviation Investigation A17C0146 Collision with terrain

Update issued on 27 December 2017

The following update contains facts that the TSB has been able to validate at this time. It contains no conclusions about the factors that contributed to the occurrence. The final investigation report will include an analysis of all relevant factors and provide the Board's findings.

The occurrence

On 13 December 2017, a ATR42-320 aircraft operated by West Wind Aviation as flight WEW282 departed Fond-du-Lac Airport, Saskatchewan (ZFD) for Stony Rapids, Saskatchewan (YSF) with 22 passengers and 3 crew on board. At 1812, shortly after takeoff, the aircraft collided with trees and terrain less than a mile west of the end of Runway 28. The aircraft was destroyed. Six passengers and one crew member sustained serious injuries. Eighteen other aircraft occupants were also injured. One of the seriously injured passengers subsequently died. The TSB is investigating.

Progress to date

An investigation team including air investigators and technical experts from the TSB Engineering Laboratory in Ottawa was deployed to the accident site. The team is wrapping up the field phase of the investigation, and will be leaving once the aircraft has been moved to a secure location. Selected components will be shipped to the TSB Lab for further examination and testing. So far the team has:

- Completed the survey of the accident site while obtaining photographs of the site and wreckage, UAV/drone imagery and airport drawings
- Surveyed the cockpit and obtained technical, operational and maintenance documents
- Recovered electronic instruments and devices that contain non-volatile memory, including the flight data recorder, the cockpit voice recorder and the emergency locator transmitter, which were transferred to the TSB Lab
- Examined both engines of the aircraft
- Conducted a partial examination of the cabin and seating arrangements
- Conducted interviews with first responders, airport employees, crew members, passengers and other witnesses in addition to obtaining copies of eyewitness statements

What we know based on the initial examination

- The aircraft descended into trees and terrain.
- The wreckage path was at least 800 feet long.
- The aircraft was in an upright position, but tilted steeply to the right.
- The left side of the aircraft appeared to be the most damaged.
- The fuselage ruptured at about seating row number 3.
- Engines were operating up to the point of contact.

Safety action taken

- West Wind has halted ATR flights while it conducts an internal review of its operations.

Working with others

The TSB conducts independent investigations. In this investigation, the following agencies have sent representatives to the site:

- The French investigative body - Bureau d'Enquêtes et d'Analyses pour la sécurité de l'aviation civile (BEA) since the aircraft was certified in France
- ATR, the aircraft manufacturer
- Pratt & Whitney Canada, the engine manufacturer

We would also like to recognize the contributions of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and of the local Canadian Rangers who protected the site.

Next steps

Among other activities in the coming days and weeks, the team will:

- Examine data from the cockpit voice recorder, the flight data recorder and other electronic devices to help determine the sequence of events prior to the accident
- Gather and analyze weather information to understand to what extent weather was a factor
- Examine aircraft maintenance records, pilot training, qualifications and proficiency records
- Conduct follow-up interviews with witnesses, the aircraft operator and others
- Review operational policies, procedures and regulatory requirements
- Examine previous occurrences involving this type of aircraft and subsequent safety action taken in Canada, the United States and other jurisdictions

Communication of safety deficiencies

Investigations are complex and we take the time needed to complete a thorough investigation. However, should the investigation team uncover safety deficiencies that present an immediate risk, the Board will communicate them without delay.

Further, it is important not to speculate, or draw conclusions as to causes at this time. There are often many factors that can contribute to an accident.

Photos

