

M. W. EASTBURN  
DIR. SAFETY

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LA GUARDIA FIELD

BULLETIN

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TO: Pilots & Flight Engineers Number 223-76  
FROM: Vice President Flight May 10, 1976  
SUBJECT: MANAGING THE APPROACH/LANDING

I'm sure all of you have read and heard a great deal about our tragic accident at St. Thomas. A great amount of investigative work has been done, but much remains to be done. The ultimate finding as to cause of the accident is of course a decision for the NTSB to render. We therefore do not presume to pre-empt the Board and make a prejudgment in the matter.

However, our daily operations must continue and I would therefore like to take the opportunity to review certain elements of all approaches and landings with you.

We have in our Operating Manuals a graphic depiction (in Section 3A) of what we call the "slot," the beginning of which is the normal decision point with regard to whether to proceed with the landing or to pull up. The target touch-down point, also graphically depicted, is 1000'. Granting that adverse atmospheric conditions may extend this point somewhat, we should virtually always have the airplane on the runway by at least the 1500' point. It's far better to "put it on" the runway, even if it will be a firm landing, than to allow it to float or to hold it off, striving for a smooth landing. Floating "eats up" runway very rapidly. In the case of the 727, deceleration on the runway is about three times greater than in the air.

While the normal decision point, as just stated, is at the beginning of the slot (approximately the middle marker), any necessary go-around should virtually always be initiated no later than the target touch-down area.

In addition to your position down the runway, another important consideration in the go-around decision is the state of the engines at initiation of the go-around. If they are spun down to idle rpm,

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remember to count on about eight seconds to obtain go-around power on the 727 and 707 (four to five seconds on the DC-10 and 747).

Waiting for this power recovery will rapidly use up runway. Any obstacle beyond the end of the runway will therefore require an earlier decision and initiation of the go-around. Never attempt to salvage a landing from a bad final approach.

Finally, let's all review our standard procedures and practices, and the guidance material in the Operating Technique section of our manuals - all of which represent a lot of thought and inputs from a lot of sources. And let us move forward in the establishment again of a safety record that dispels the notion of the inevitability of an eventual accident in a large operation such as ours. Instead, let's embrace the notion that accidents do not have to happen in our business.

Captain D. E. Ehmann

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