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「機体が二つに折れたよう」 米NYのサウスウエスト機事故

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前輪が損傷したサウスウエスト機 = WPIX 提供



（CNN）米ニューヨーク市のラガーディア空港で22日に発生したサウスウエスト機が滑走路に着陸する際に前輪が損傷した事故で、搭乗していた乗客はCNNの番組内で、「飛行機が真っ二つに折れたようだった」と着陸時の様子を語った。

同機に搭乗していたキャシー・ポールズさんによれば、前輪が損傷し機首が滑走路に接触した際に「強い揺れ」を感じたという。ポールズさんは「バンと音がしてはねた。そして、急ブレーキがかかり、滑った感じがした」と語った。

別の乗客も当時の様子をとても混乱した状態だったと述べた。

米連邦航空局（FAA）によると、事故を起こしたのはテネシー州ナッシュビルから到着したサウスウエスト航空345便のボーイング737-700型機。滑走路に着陸した後、午後5時40分ごろに無事停止した。

当局によれば、事故によって10人が負傷した。当初は11人が負傷したとしていた。乗員の負傷者数に関して情報の錯綜（さくそう）が見られた。

○NBC 5 NEWS

NTSB Launching Full Investigation into Southwest Landing Gear Collapse

8 injured after hard landing at LaGuardia Tuesday, Jul 23, 2013 | Updated 1:06 PM CDT Kendra Lyn, NBC 5 News

Dallas based Southwest Airlines has sent a team of 7 investigators to assist in the investigation after the landing gear collapsed on a Southwest plane at LaGuardia Airport.

Dallas-based Southwest Airlines says it's cooperating with federal investigators, including the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board, as they gather more information on a hard landing of a Southwest jet that injured eight people.

On Tuesday, the NTSB said they will launch a full investigation into the Southwest incident at LaGuardia Airport. NTSB representatives said there was substantial damage to the aircraft.

LaGuardia Airport in New York is fully operating again following the hard landing. A spokesman for the agency that runs LaGuardia Airport says the airport's second runway reopened Tuesday morning. The

other runway had reopened Monday.

The front landing gear of Southwest Airlines flight 345 arriving from Nashville, Tenn., collapsed Monday right after the plane touched down on the runway, officials said, sending it skidding along the tarmac and temporarily closing the airport.

Southwest Airlines tells NBC 5 that the company sent a team of seven investigators from the headquarters in Dallas to New York to assist the NTSB and FAA. They're searching the plane for clues as to why the landing gear collapsed.

"The NTSB is doing what they call a preliminary investigation," says Linda Rutherford, Southwest Airlines Vice President of Communication and Outreach. "That involves a review of the cockpit voice recorder and the flight data recorder.

Rutherford says right now the feds are also interviewing the two pilots behind the controls of the Boeing 737 when it took a nose-dive during its landing. The nose of the plane touched the tarmac and sent sparks flying. The plane then skidded to a stop in the grass.

Passengers onboard say it was more than just a little bit of a rough ride.

"Oh, hell no. No, no, no, no, no. It was more like being in a car wreck. It was like getting smashed in a car wreck.," says passenger Bill Roland.

Out of the 150 customers and crew on board, 3 passengers, 2 pilots and 3 flight attendants had to be treated at the hospital, fewer than first reported.

"They have in fact been treated and released, so we're obviously grateful for that," says Rutherford.

Southwest tells us it took care of passengers immediate needs: hotel rooms, meals, and medical care.

The company is working to give customers a refund, and send out an apology letter and two tickets for a future flight.

Passenger Describe Exit From Plane

The flight was delayed leaving Nashville. Passengers heard an announcement saying "something was wrong with a tire," said a passenger, Sgt. 1st Class Anniebell Hanna, 43, of the South Carolina National Guard.

At LaGuardia, "when we got ready to land, we nosedived," she said. She and some family members were coming to New York for a visit.

"I hit my head against the seat in front of me," she said. "I hit hard."

The nose of the plane was "completely down on the ground," said Richard Strauss, who was on a nearby plane waiting to take off. "It's something that I've never seen before. It's bizarre."

Emergency crews were seen spraying foam toward the front end of the plane on the tarmac.

A rear stairwell or slide could be seen extending from the Southwest flight, said Strauss, who owns a Washington public relations firm. His plane, which was about 100 yards from the Southwest flight, wasn't allowed to taxi back to the gate, he said.

The Port Authority said the passengers exited the plane by using chutes. Hanna said she was among the first to get off the plane, and could smell something burning when she got down to the tarmac. The passengers were put on a bus and taken to the terminal.

Bobby Abtahi, an attorney trying to catch a flight to Dallas, was watching from the terminal and heard a crowd reacting.

"I heard some people gasp and scream. I looked over and saw sparks flying at the front of the plane," he said.

The landing gear collapse came 16 days after Asiana Flight 214 crash-landed at San Francisco's airport, killing two Chinese teenagers; a third was killed when a fire truck ran over her while responding to the crash, authorities said. Dozens of people were injured in that landing, which involved a Boeing 777 flying from South Korea.

Longtime pilot Patrick Smith, author of "Cockpit Confidential: Everything You Need to Know About Air Travel. Questions, Answers, and Reflections" and AskthePilot.com, said landing gear issues are not high on the list of worries for pilots.

"From a pilot's perspective, this is nearly a non-issue," he said. "They make for good television, but this is far down the list of nightmares for pilots."

Passengers React to Hard Landing

Bill Roland, a passenger on the Southwest flight, said it felt like being in a car accident when the plane made impact with the runway.

"It sort of came down really fast, and kind of steep. And then it sort of banged, and then it banged again and then it sort of skidded to a stop," he said. "It all stopped quicker than you would have thought."

Roland did not know at the time that the nose of the plane had caught fire or that the landing gear was broken, but witnesses on the ground saw what they described as a "fireball" skidding down the runway.

The plane "was just screeching down the runway, fire on both sides," said Steve Czech, who was waiting for his American Airlines flight to take off when he saw the Southwest flight touch down. "There was debris kind of rolling off to the sides."

Czech said passengers on his flight shrieked as they watched.

"I was concerned, obviously, about the people on the plane. And then when I saw the debris rolling off, I was wondering if we were going to be in the debris field and get hit by some of the debris," he said.

Melina Andujar and her husband saw the plane approach the runway, and say they knew something was wrong.

"My husband noticed it was out of shape, like it wasn't supposed to land that way," she said. "He said, 'Oh, my God, I think something's wrong.'"

"The front wheel didn't come out, and it landed on its nose and it started skidding," said Andujar, who saw sparks fly as the plane landed.

The plane ended up on a grassy area about halfway down runway 4, between the runway and a taxiway, said Bosco.

Southwest passengers said they had no warning from the pilot they were about to crash land, and the sudden impact left everyone "a little nervous and freaked out," according to Eric Westmaas.

NBC 5's Kendra Lyn and Greg Janda as well as Associate Press writers contributed to this report.

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