ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION COMMISSION

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Safety recommendation: AIC 20-R33 /19-2002

Addressed to: Air Niugini Limited

Date issued: 2 October 2020

Investigation Link: AIC 19-2002

Action statues: Closed

Introduction

On 21 November 2019, at about 16:00 local time (06:00 UTC), the Papua New Guinea Accident Investigation Commission became aware about an alleged occurrence earlier that afternoon, involving a Fokker 70 aircraft, registered P2-ANY, owned and operated by Air Niugini Limited.

On 22 November 2019, at 16:13, upon request of the AIC, Papua New Guinea Air Services Limited provided details of the occurrence. Subsequently, the AIC commenced an investigation and immediately dispatched a team of investigators to Air Niugini Limited head office to commence onsite activities.

Occurrence

On 21 November 2019, at about 15:21 local time (05:21 UTC), a Fokker 70 aircraft, registered P2-ANY, owned and operated by Air Niugini Limited, while conducting a scheduled flight from Tokua Airport, East New Britain Province to Jacksons International Airport, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea experienced a rapid depressurisation event during a normal descent, about 51 nm North East of Jacksons.

The aircraft had four crew; two pilots and two Cabin Crew, and 41 passengers.

P2-ANY landed at 15:47, and taxied to the parking bay where a normal disembarkation was conducted for all passengers and crew. There were no injuries or damage reported.

Safety deficiency description

Cabin depressurisation, according to the Operator's *Corporate Emergency Response Manual (CERM), section 2.4*, would be referred to as an *'Operational Emergency'*, that is, not requiring a corporate response and does not require Emergency Coordination Centre activation. Such emergencies are to be managed by relevant Department Heads/managers, coordinating their efforts in their normal operational roles as a procedure which must be documented in a relevant departmental manual. This is because the situation can be resolved through a small number of senior company managers operating in conjunction at a department level.

The investigation found that about seven minutes after the emergency event, the PIC initially notified Ops Control about the depressurisation event, and after landing, as the aircraft was taxing in, the copilot requested OC to ensure that customer services (CS) personnel meet the passengers on arrival. The DMOC's statement, provided to the AIC, showed that immediately after radio communication with the PIC, relevant senior management personnel of Maintenance Watch, Kilo Charlie (Ramp coordination), Ground Operations and Aviation Security (AVSEC) were briefed about the situation. Specific instructions were given to CS to contact St. Johns Ambulance and AVSEC to provide transport, if required.

The investigation found that the Operator's *Airport Services Manual* contained a detailed emergency response procedure in relation to *'operational emergency'*. However, the Customer Services Officer who met the flight was unaware of the occurrence. She was later advised by one of the cabin crew after all passengers had disembarked.

Although the Operator's *Flight Administration Manual* stated that Manager Safety and Compliance is the department's responsible person for any *'operational emergency'*, he was not included in the DMOC's briefing. The flight crew stated that they resumed flying duties the next day, without attending medical checks.

The investigation also found that the Operator's *Cabin Crew Administration Manual* did not have a documented procedure in relation to emergency response. The cabin crew stated, during interview, that they had completed medical checks the following day, and were cleared as medically fit to resume flying duties.

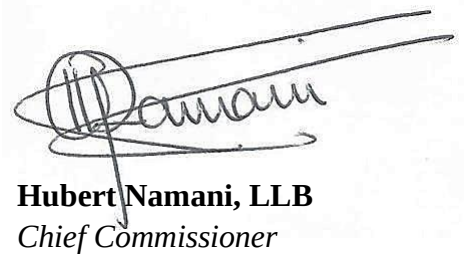
The investigation determined that the Operator's emergency response procedures at the departmental level was either inadequate, or not consistent with its corporate emergency response policy.

Recommendation AIC 20-R33/19-2002 to Air Niugini Limited

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission recommends that Air Niugini Limited should ensure that its emergency response procedures at the departmental level are adequate and consistent with its Corporate Emergency Response Policy, and are understood by the staff.

Action requested

The AIC requests that Air Niugini Limited note recommendation *AIC 20-R33/19-2002*, and provide a response to the AIC within 90 days of the issue date and explain including evidence, how Air Niugini Limited has addressed the safety deficiency in the safety recommendation.



Hubert Namani, LLB
Chief Commissioner
2 October 2020

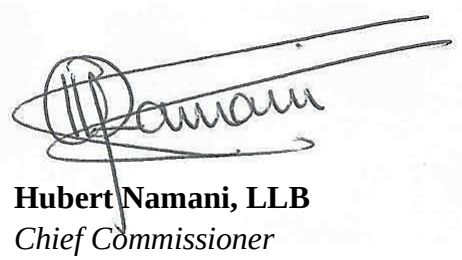
Closing statement

In their response, Air Niugini Limited (ANL) stated that, in their view, the safety recommendation had been found to be already complied with on the date of the occurrence.

Notwithstanding ANL's views with regard to compliance with the safety recommendation, in their response they informed AIC that they had planned to impart training/briefing to all its Customer Services staff regarding attending to aircraft arriving with different emergencies so as to prepare themselves with appropriate arrangements to attend to the situation, which was part of the safety deficiency identified by the AIC as in the investigation it was found that the Customer Services Officer who met the flight was unaware of the occurrence, and was later advised by one of the cabin crew, only after all passengers had disembarked. On 21 January 2021, ANL provided records of one table-top exercise which was conducted on 12 November 2020, indicating that only part of their customer services staff attended this exercise.

In addition to the above mentioned and contrary to ANL's response that their Airport Services Manual (ASM) does not contain a detailed *'operational emergency'* procedure, the AIC found that section 12 of the ASM includes a departmental emergency response plan which is to be carried out in situations where no corporate emergency has been declared. This procedure clearly meets the criteria of an operational emergency, as described in ANL's Corporate Emergency Response Manual.

According to AIC assessment, Air Niugini Limited response does not address the safety issues and the safety deficiencies identified during the investigation. Therefore, the AIC assigned Air Niugini Limited response a rating of *unsatisfactory* and recorded the Status of the AIC recommendation: **CLOSED RESPONSE NOT ACCEPTED.**



Hubert Namani, LLB
Chief Commissioner
18 March 2021