



08/2024
09 August 2024

MEDIA RELEASE

BOEING 737-800 AIRCRAFT, P2-PXB, HAZARD MATERIAL SPILLAGE AT JACKSONS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, PORT MORESBY

The Chief Commissioner of the PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC), Maryanne J. Wal, yesterday announced that the AIC has commenced an investigation into a serious incident involving the spillage of hazardous material, mercury, in the cargo compartment of an Air Niugini Boeing 737-800 aircraft at Jacksons International Airport, Port Moresby on 23 July 2024.

The AIC was notified of the occurrence on 08 August 2024, at 12:04 local time. Air Niugini advised the AIC that on the day of the occurrence, as cargo handlers were loading P2-PXB for flight PX 102 to Nadzab, they observed liquid leaking from one of the packages. After further inspection by Air Niugini Ground Staff, they confirmed that it was mercury. The package had an office 3 in 1 printer device with seven 330 ml containers filled with mercury concealed inside. The flight was subsequently cancelled, and all passengers and crew disembarked. The aircraft has remained grounded since the date of the occurrence.

The United Nations classifies mercury as a Class 8, corrosive substance. Mercury poses a significant risk to aircraft metal structures which are made of aluminum. It is also recognized as a Class 6.1, toxic substance which has severe health effects if inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through the skin.

Based on the AIC's assessment, the occurrence was considered to have posed significant risk to passengers, crew, and the baggage handlers. If the baggage handlers had not spotted the spillage, the flight would have proceeded with an amplified risk.

The AIC's mandate, under the Civil Aviation Act 2000 (as Amended), is to conduct independent investigations for the sole purpose of determining the circumstances and contributing factors so that vital lessons are learned, and similar occurrences are avoided in the future. AIC investigations do not apportion blame or liability.

More information about this investigation can be found at www.aic.gov.pg

Authorised for release by:

Maryanne J. Wal
Chief Commissioner

