

06PRL016

Living on a prayer - 44 runway overruns in 2005



CHERTSEY 31 January: The 2006 overrun statistics started with two incidents within seven days. On the 21st of January a B-707 owned by the rock group BonJovi overran at Hamilton, Ontario. This incident was followed up by an ERJ145 overrunning at Stuttgart last week. Happily, both incidents were without injury to either passengers or crew. Not so happily, statistically, this is ahead of the average for this type of incident. In 2005, overruns involving air transport category aircraft were a disturbingly regular occurrence with an average of 3.6 events per month.

This data serves to underline IFALPA's position on runway end safety. Runway overruns are not isolated incidents that airports can afford to ignore as a remote likelihood. The fact is overruns continue to happen, and what is more, they happen frequently.

IFALPA has long argued that given the frequency of these events it is reasonable to establish adequate runway end safety areas (RESAs), or where this is not possible, an alternative means of compliance would be the installation of an arrestor bed whose performance allows at least the equivalent level of safety as the recommended RESA. This level would be a RESA which extends a minimum of 240m beyond the end of the paved surface at a Cat 3 or 4 airport (the RESA should not be confused with the runway threshold, which on some runways is displaced some distance in from the edge of the paved surface). In any event access to the Critical Rescue and Fire Fighting Access Area must be assured.

The logic of this position is supported by case histories of accidents gathered over a number of years. The fact is that where an aircraft remains upright and on firm ground the injuries to passengers and crew and damage to airframes have been light. Where this is not the case there have been serious injuries and fatalities. Last year for example, where the aircraft remained upright and within the airport perimeter, there were only a handful of light injuries recorded.

Where the aircraft did not remain upright and/or within the perimeter the result was 108 deaths and, in addition, a further 30 cases of serious injuries requiring hospitalisation.

Notes to Editors

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations represents in excess of 100,000 pilots in more than 95 countries world-wide. The mission of IFALPA is to be the global voice of airline pilots, promoting the highest level of aviation safety and security world-wide and providing services, support and representation to all of its Member Associations. See the Federation website www.ifalpa.org

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