

Press Office
City of Chicago, Department of Aviation
Nuria I. Fernandez, Commissioner



News Release

October 2, 2007
Contact: **Gregg Cunningham**
(773) 686-3700
gcunningham@cityofchicago.org

NTSB ISSUES FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING SOUTHWEST FLIGHT 1248

WASHINGTON, DC - The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) today released the results of its investigation into the accident involving Southwest Airlines 1248 that occurred on December 8, 2005.

The Board found that the probable cause of the accident was the pilots' failure to deploy reverse thrusters in a timely manner.

Additionally, the Board found that Midway Airport staff performed to standards, communicated runway conditions, and kept the runways clear during the inclement weather on the night of December 8th.

The NTSB also found that an arrestor bed installation would likely have lessened the severity of the accident. NTSB staff explained that the latest generation of arrestor bed technology would not have allowed for an installation at Midway at the time of the accident.

Arrestor bed technology only became available to Midway in the spring of 2006 after three things occurred. First, in October 2005, the FAA issued guidelines to airports on "non-standard" arrestor bed installations. Second, the manufacturer of arrestor beds made improvements to its product by adding a jet-blast coating. Finally, the improved arrestor bed product was installed at New York's La Guardia Airport and performed well during the '05-'06 winter season.

In 2006, an arrestor bed was installed at runway end 13C and held up well to the effects of jet-blast and winter weather at Midway. Additional arrestor beds are now being installed at the other three runway ends, and should be completed by the end of the year.

Department of Aviation Commissioner Nuria Fernandez said, "We appreciate the thorough work of the NTSB and we agree with the Board's assessment that Midway Airport staff performed their duties well on the night of the accident."

- MORE -

The Safety Board made a number of safety recommendations as the result of its investigation, including:

- The NTSB urged the FAA to immediately require airlines to conduct a landing safety assessment.
- The NTSB urged the FAA to move toward incorporating friction measurement capability in aircraft so that pilots have standardized, real-time data on runway conditions.
- The NTSB urged the FAA to complete Runway Safety Area upgrades on all 456 runways initially identified as being out of compliance with RSA safety standards. According to the NTSB, 303 have been completed to date.

“As operator of two of the nation’s leading airports, we stand ready to work with the FAA to implement the recommendations of the NTSB. We agree that there should be standardization of measuring and reporting runway conditions so that pilots can make the best possible decisions based on consistent, real-time data,” Fernandez added.

~ ~ ~ ~

The Chicago Airport System is self-supporting, using no local or state tax dollars for operations or capital improvements at O’Hare and Midway International airports. Together, Chicago’s airports generate more than \$45 billion in annual economic activity and create 540,000 jobs for the region. Please visit www.flychicago.com to learn more about the Chicago Airport System.

#