

INCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration: DC-9-83 (MD-83), G-DCAC

No & Type of Engines: 2 Pratt & Whitney JT8D-219 turbofan engines

Year of Manufacture: 1990

Date & Time (UTC): 3 September 1994

Location: Manchester Airport

Type of Flight: Public Transport

Persons on Board: Crew - 7 Passengers - 166

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: None

Commander's Licence: Airline Transport Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 27 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 5,700 hours (of which 2,600 were on type)
Last 90 days - 198 hours
Last 28 days - 42 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the
company flight safety officer

The aircraft departed Manchester Airport at 0020 hrs for Ibiza. In the climb passing FL160 the cabin supervisor informed the commander that there was a rear galley oven fire which was being dealt with by the cabin crew. The flight crew made a 'PAN' call to Manchester ATC and the aircraft was given radar vectors for an immediate recovery to Manchester. Airport emergency services were put on full alert to await the arrival of the aircraft onto Runway 06.

During the approach the commander was informed that the fire had been extinguished and that the electrical supply to the rear galley had been removed. During the later stages of the approach, however, a strong smell of electrical burning became apparent and smoke re-appeared. Immediately the aircraft had landed a cabin attendant, seated at the rear on the aisle jump seat, collected a BCF fire extinguisher and successfully attacked the source of the smoke which was again emanating from the oven. In doing so she became partially incapacitated by the smoke and fumes. A second cabin crew member, carrying a 'Drager Oxycrow' protective breathing hood, had by now joined her but neither crew member was able to remove the hood from its packaging.

The commander and cabin supervisor were not aware that there had been a further problem with the rear galley. On stopping the aircraft the commander, in accordance with company Standard Operating Procedures, instructed the passengers to remain seated. He then ordered the cabin crew to open the doors and lower the aircraft stairs. A senior airport fire officer boarded the aircraft, appraised the situation and requested that the passengers be disembarked. This was carried out via the normal exits in an orderly manner.

After the incident the galley was inspected by engineers and the company flight safety officer. No evidence was found of electrical fire or damage to the oven unit. Subsequent examination of the oven insert, used for the pre-loading of frozen meal trays, showed that it was heavily contaminated with a layer of burnt food and it was considered that the smoke was caused by direct heating of this contamination in the course of normal oven operations. As the meals already loaded in the insert showed no sign of leaking it was considered that the contamination had occurred on a previous occasion and had not been cleaned from the insert during the pre-flight preparation.

Investigation of the 'Drager Oxycrow' equipment revealed that there was no defect in the equipment packaging. After a subsequent crew de-brief, however, it was determined that the method used to open the sealed bag container was incorrect and resulted in a tear along a seam becoming increasingly difficult to manipulate.