

Business



Alaska jet has emergency landing

REUTERS

An Alaska Airlines MD-80 jet made an emergency landing minutes after takeoff from San Francisco International Airport late on Monday when the control tower noticed sparks streaming from its tail, an airport official said.

No one was injured in the incident, which occurred one week after Alaska Airlines Flight 261 plunged into the Pacific Ocean, killing all 88 people on board.

It was at least the third time since the Jan. 31 crash that a plane of the MD-80 design had been forced to land after experiencing in-flight problems. In an interview with NBC's "Today" show on Tuesday, Alaska Airlines Chief Executive Officer John Kelly said he believed these were isolated problems with the MD-80.

"We have over 3,500 flights a week ourselves and there are over 1,200 of these aircraft. It's one of the safest aircraft that's out there and has the lowest accident record," Kelly said. However, he said pilots were being extra cautious after last week's crash. "The good news is people are coming back if there is any sign of a problem," he said.

San Francisco airport duty manager Dennis Neves said Monday's

emergency landing involved Alaska Airlines Flight 289, which had been bound for Seattle.

Flight 289 originated in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, flying the same route as the jet that crashed one week ago on its way to San Francisco.

Neves said the incident occurred just minutes after the jet left the runway, and prompted a full emergency response by fire trucks and other emergency ground crews.

"About 245 feet (81 km) above the ground, the control tower noticed sparks coming from the rear of the aircraft and advised the pilot," Neves said. "The pilot decided to return to the airport."

The passengers disembarked and were put on other Seattle-bound aircraft, Neves said, adding that the incident was under investigation and that the plane was being held in San Francisco for checks.

Black History Month



This week's observation of Black History Month cover the years of 1900 - 1950. Can you name this Black genius and his two famous patents that are currently being used in fire departments, emergency rescue squads and street corners worldwide? For the answer, see Focus.

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Commissioner to propose City Council meet at night, neighborhood locations

CONTRIBUTED STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Making good on a promise made six months ago, City Commissioner Charlie Hales will ask the Portland City Council to permanently approve holding monthly night meetings as well as occasional meetings at locations in various city neighborhoods.

"Six months ago we began meeting at night as a grand experiment," said Hales. "At that time, I predicted the public support for night meetings would make it obvious that we needed to do so on a permanent basis and that has certainly been the case." Last summer, Hales won Council approval of a six-month experiment to hold monthly evening meetings of the Council. Today, Hales will ask the Council for approval of monthly night meetings on a permanent basis.

"The logic behind nightly Council meetings is sound," Hales said. "Government should be open and accessible to all the people, not just lobbyists, lawyers and bureaucrats." Hales noted that the night meetings over the last six months have drawn large crowds of citizens to testify before the Council on issues ranging from the construction of light rail on North Interstate Avenue to proposed changes in water and sewer rates.

"This experiment has been an unqualified success," Hales said. "Citizens from all parts of Portland have finally made it inside the doors of City Hall to be heard by their elected representatives."

Mayor Vera Katz joined Hales in sponsoring the expansion of the proposal to include occasional meetings of the council at locations within city neighborhoods. The first neighborhood City Council meeting will be held on March 15 in Hollywood to discuss the Hollywood/Sandy master plan.

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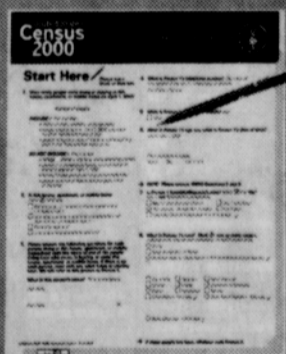
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