

The flight record further reveals that the Boeing 727 was established in a stabilized climbing turn altitude for approximately 20 seconds prior to collision impact.

The operations group is responsible for developing all facts concerning the history of the flight and flightcrew activity in the final phases of the flight, before and as the accident occurred. This includes flight planning, dispatching, weight and balance, radio communications, navigation facilities, en route stops, refueling, and aeronautical experience, flight checks, and general information concerning the flightcrew.

The medical history of the crew, including any recent illnesses, psychological factors, crew rest periods, and activities during the 24 hours prior to the accident is determined. This latter aspect of the investigation is coordinated with the human factors group to insure that all information assembled is utilized to full advantage.

The operations group also develops information on the flightpath just prior to the accident. In this effort, coordination with the air traffic control and witness groups is essential. An approximate flightpath of the two aircraft involved is being prepared in the Hendersonville investigation. Work is proceeding in the documentation of cockpit instrumentation, crew history, flight planning, dispatching, and operational procedures employed.

The weather group is responsible for the collection and compilation of all factual meteorological data pertinent to the accident, including both surface and upper air reports of actual conditions, pilot reports, recorded meteorological data, as well as forecasts of anticipated conditions prepared and issued by the responsible agencies. Of necessity, close coordination must be maintained with other groups, particularly the operations, air traffic control, and witness groups.

In the instant case, we are particularly interested in ascertaining the sky conditions, cloud coverage, and visibility in the area before and subsequent to the time of the accident. This phase of the investigation is virtually completed.

The air traffic control group is responsible for the review of the original records of the air traffic service units whose activities or services may have been involved in the accident.

Examine where available all radar screen recordings; monitor all original voice recording, and verify that written transcripts of voice communications are consistent with the rerecordings. Provide a reconstruction of the history of the flight based on ATC information. Determine the operating status of pertinent navigation aids, communications equipment, radar, transponder equipment, and so forth, and provides technical data on all such equipment and its operation, ascertain if the equipment is capable of operating to prescribed standards in the geographical area where it is installed. The chairman of this group is responsible for the cockpit voice recorder readout and coordinates this activity with the operations group chairman.

In a midair collision, it is axiomatic that a substantial portion of the investigative activity will be concentrated in the air traffic control area. This has been the case in this accident investigation just as it was in the earlier midair collision near Urbana, Ohio, and in all preceding midair collisions.