

PRESS RELEASE

The Hague, 17 May 2011

Crashed airplane Divi Divi Air was overloaded

Care for safety at Curaçao and Bonaire fails

The Dutch Safety Board investigated the accident with an airplane of Divi Divi Air at 22 October 2009. The pilot was killed in this accident. The nine passengers escaped the airplane relatively unharmed and were picked up by boats nearby the crash site. The wreckage with the pilot inside was salvaged at a later time. The results of the investigation paint a disquieting picture of the aviation safety at Curaçao and the crisis and relieve at Bonaire.

The Board has drawn several conclusions. The investigation showed that the airplane was unable to maintain horizontal flight after one of the engines had failed due to overloading. The airplane was overloaded by 9%. With the continuation of the flight under these circumstances the pilot took a completely unacceptable risk. Furthermore the Board has established that Divi Divi Air used standard passengers weight that were too low. In a random check performed it was shown that the maximal start- and landings weights allowed, were systematically exceeded.

The investigation has revealed that the Divi Divi Air management has insufficiently supervised the safety of the flight operations of their airplanes. Also the supervisor at that time for civilian aviation at the Netherlands Antilles, the Directorate Aviation, supervised the operations of Divi Divi Air in a limited way. Because of this there was insufficient attention for the risks of overloading and made it possible that the dangerous situation on 22 October 2009 to occur.

The Board would like to draw attention to the audit performed by the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) in 2008 into the regulatory processes for civil aviation on the Netherlands Antilles and the supervision on the correct execution of these processes. This audit revealed many deviations of the ICAO standards and regulations. Because of this a corrective action program was set up. Although the Board has not investigated the follow up of this program, the Board is concerned about the supervision on civil aviation at Curaçao.

In reference to the alerting and crisis relief there was very limited coordination between the different aid organizations. Subsequently the performance was not as to be expected. The command place incident (CoPI), that was responsible for the coordination of the aid organizations according to the contingency plan for the island territory Bonaire, was not informed. Managers were insufficiently prepared for their tasks. Furthermore the boats of the fire department and the police were not deployable for a longer period of time.

The results of the investigation have resulted in recommendation of the Board to Divi Divi Air and the Minister of Traffic, Transportation and Spatial Planning of Curaçao and the Governor of Bonaire.

Mededeling voor redacties

Voor nadere informatie kunt u zich wenden tot de woordvoerder van de Raad, Sandra Groenendal, 0623175701 of 070 333 7059. De volledige tekst van het rapport kan worden geraadpleegd op de website van de Onderzoeksraad www.onderzoeksraad.nl.