



MEDIA STATEMENT

Durban, Thursday 24 September 2009.

An SA Airlink Jetstream 41 Turboprop aircraft, carrying 3 passengers, experienced engine problems after take off from Durban International Airport this morning. The aircraft was unable to maintain altitude and the crew attempted to land on a sports field of a local school at a suburb just 3km north east of the airport. The aircraft had diverted from Pietermaritzburg on Wednesday evening due to bad weather.

The flight being undertaken was a positioning flight back to Pietermaritzburg with no paying passengers onboard. The aircraft impacted a concrete fence which caused damage to the cockpit, severely injuring the two pilots. The flight attendant on board was also taken to hospital with suspected back or neck injuries. A municipal worker on the ground was also injured by the aircraft and was taken to hospital. Fortunately, no fire erupted as a result of the crash, even though the aircraft has been extensively damaged.

Rescue and firefighting teams were on the scene within minutes, but it took two and a half hours to extract the last crewmember from the cockpit, without causing further injuries. Senior representatives from the Civil Aviation Authority and the Department of Transport who happened to be in Durban, were on the scene within 30 minutes and an accident investigation team was also dispatched from Johannesburg.

The SA Police Services responsible for securing the wreckage quickly cordoned off the area, to ensure that evidence critical to the accident investigation would not be tampered with by those at the scene.

A preliminary accident report will be released in due course by the Chief Investigator.

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