

Morning Jet to Kodiak Grounded After Icy Landing

Tuesday, 13 January 2009

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

The morning Alaska Airlines jet into Kodiak Tuesday was grounded after the pilots maxed out the engines trying to get it stopped on the extremely icy runway.

Alaska Airlines spokeswoman Caroline Boren in Seattle said the flight crew found the runway was far slipperier than the airport had led them to expect.

The airport is on the Kodiak Coast Guard base, and the Coast Guard fire department responded, but after determining there was no emergency, they returned to their station.

Boren said the pilots were able to get the plane stopped by the time they reached the end of runway 36, which terminates on the bank of the Buskin River, by using maximum power on the engines' reverse thrusters.

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A passenger who asked not to be identified said the plane veered away from the centerline of the runway into the snow and slush, and he could see it showering the windows of the jet. He said when the plane came to a stop it was on the side of the runway in the snow. The pilots were able to dislodge the plane without help. The passenger praised the pilots for making the best landing they could, given the conditions.

The plane, a 737-400 with 34 passengers and five crew aboard, taxied under its own power to the terminal, but Alaska Airlines decided to ground the plane to check for damage from using maximum reverse thrust. The return flight to Anchorage was cancelled, but another airplane has been put on the Kodiak route, and Boren says the schedule should be back to normal now.

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Maintenance

workers were seen inside the intake of the engines during the afternoon. There's a possibility that while at full throttle and off the side of the runway, the engines ingested foreign objects.

Boren said it might take up to several days to get mechanics to Kodiak and check out the aircraft. No injuries were reported.