

INCIDENT – FURTHER INFORMATION

Pan Am Flight crew

Name	Total flying time	Total time on a 747
Captain Victor Grubbs	21,043 hrs	564 hrs
First Officer Robert Bragg	10,800 hrs	2,796 hrs
Flight Engineer George Warns	15,210 hrs	559 hrs

KLM Flight crew

Name	Total flying time	Total time on a 747
Captain Jacob Veldhuyzen Van Zanten	11,700 hrs	1,545 hrs
First Officer Klaas Meurs	9,200 hrs	95 hrs
Flight Engineer Willem Schreuder	17,031 hrs	543 hrs

Weather report

13:30 	17:02 	17:10 
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flights land at Los Rodeos airport• Runway visibility – 3km• Intermittent light rain and fog at distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Both flights taxiing down the runway• Runway visibility – 300m• Light rain and fog patches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes after crash• Runway visibility – 1km• Intermittent light rain and fog patches

Development Proposal for a new airport in Tenerife

Submitted by: The Canary Islands Aviation Group
Date: 1970

Summary

The growing popularity of Tenerife as a holiday destination has put increased strain on the current infrastructure on the island, particularly on the airport in the North. Los Rodeos has a poor safety record, with at least one serious incident a year between 1965 – 68. Located 2000ft above sea level, the weather is unpredictable and visibility very poor, which makes it a difficult runway to navigate. This was the main cause of the crash in 1965, when a landing failed due to poor visibility, resulting in 30 fatalities. The airport hasn't yet been modernised with appropriate equipment to manage these conditions, such as ground radar.

To reduce the pressure on this small airport, we propose the development of a new runway on the south of the island. This new airport will be located in an area with more favourable conditions and will be bigger, to cope with the increase in demand for flights to Tenerife. Long term, this development will improve our safety record and will boost our economy, allowing more people to visit Tenerife as a holiday destination.

KLM Cockpit transcript – moments before take off

Times taken from KLM CVR.

1705:44.6
KIM 4805: The KIM four eight zero five is now ready for take-off and we are waiting for our ATC clearance. (1705:50.77).

1705:53.41
Tower: KLM eight seven zero five you are cleared to the Papa Beacon, climb to and maintain flight level nine zero, right turn after take-off, proceed with heading four zero until intercepting the three two five radial from Las Palmas VOR. (1706:08.09).

1706:09.61
KIM 4805: Ah - Roger, sir, we are cleared to the Papa Beacon, flight level nine zero until intercepting the three two five. We are now (at take-off). (1706:17.79).

1706:18.19
Tower: O.K. (1706:21.79).

Note:
A squeal starts at: 1706:19.39
The squeal ends at: 1706:22.06

I have been a Captain for over 20 years and fly between London and Los Rodeos airport regularly. I was devastated to hear about the crash, but I can't say I was surprised. I have raised my concerns about the airport on more than one occasion – the visibility is so unpredictable that the airport really needs to invest in ground radar. The Air Traffic Control team try their best, but they often can't see the runway from their control tower, let alone any planes. They are relying on the flight crew to communicate exactly where they are, which is sometimes lost in translation. I just wish I had pushed harder to have my concerns listened to. Maybe if I had, this tragic accident could have been prevented...



British Airways Captain



Air Traffic Control Team Manager, Los Rodeos Airport

We have done a full internal review of the actions of the two air traffic control staff working at the time of the crash. We concluded that they were both trying their best in very stressful circumstances.

It was meant to be a quiet shift, which is why there were only two people on the rota. But due to the unplanned diversion, they were managing three radio frequencies between the two of them. As they were rushing to manage the huge workload, they made a couple of errors in their radio communications, but this is understandable based on the pressure they were under and the fact that English isn't their first language.

And as for the claim that they were listening to the Spain/Hungary football match on the radio...we conclude that this did not impact their work at all. They have admitted that it had been on in the background, as the radio often is during a quiet shift. However, as they were so busy, they weren't listening to it.

As a result of this review, we have removed the radio from the control tower and have allocated an on call staff member on the rota, should a change in flight traffic happen in the future.