

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

KC-10A, B-2 Aircraft Maintenance Stand 60th Air Mobility Wing, Travis Air Force Base, California 17 December 2005

At 1910 Zulu (Z) on 17 December 2005, two aircraft maintenance technicians (M1 and M2) began a maintenance job on the left horizontal stabilizer of a KC-10A (MA) at Travis Air Force Base, California. This maintenance job required the use of a B-2 maintenance stand (MS) to access the stabilizer. M1 and M2 positioned the MS and inspected it for serviceability. During this inspection, M1 noticed the removable front rail of the MS did not fit properly on its mounting posts. In spite of this problem with the front rail, M1 decided to use the MS instead of documenting its unserviceability and retrieving another stand. At 1941Z, after assessing hardware needs, M1 and M2 departed the MA to retrieve the necessary hardware. M1 and M2 decided then to break for lunch before returning to the MA. However, before M1 and M2 returned to the MA, the on-duty maintenance expediter (M3) directed M2 to complete another task, leaving M1 to complete the stabilizer job alone. M1 arrived back at the MA at 2058Z, and completed several tasks on the MS; at 2150Z, M1 fell approximately 13 feet through an open railing at the front left side of the MS, striking his back and head on the concrete parking surface. At the time of the mishap, only the right side of the MS's front rail was properly installed. Within two minutes of falling, M1 was discovered lying on the ground by the M3. M3 checked M1's condition and immediately called for emergency medical assistance. Emergency medical personnel from the fire department arrived within 10 minutes; M1 was provided emergency treatment and transported to the hospital on base. However, M1's injuries were too severe, and he died four days later.

Based on clear and convincing evidence, the Board President determined the primary cause of the mishap was a failure by M1 to follow Air Force Occupational Safety Hazard (AFOSH) standards. These standards require rails on B-2 stands to be properly installed when maintenance is being performed from the stand (work platform) at heights greater than 10 feet, when the stand is positioned more than 14 inches from the side of an aircraft. In addition, the Board President determined there was substantial evidence that the unserviceable condition of the MS was a contributing factor in the mishap.

Under 10 U.S.C. 2254(d), any opinion of the accident investigators as to the cause of, or the factors contributing to, the accident set forth in the accident investigation report may not be considered as evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding arising from an aircraft accident, nor may such information be considered an admission of liability by the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements.