



been assisted onto the aircraft by air carrier staff. The aircraft had just been refueled with 6,000 gallons of Jet-A. Two air carrier personnel were inside the forward cargo compartment loading baggage when they heard the explosion and evacuated.

An aircraft mechanic had just replaced a cylinder on the aircraft oxygen system in the forward avionics compartment, located in the belly of the aircraft, just aft of the nose gear. The 1,100 psi, three-cylinder system provides oxygen to the crew and passengers. The system had been written up six times in the previous four weeks for leaking oxygen. Leaking gaseous oxygen came in contact with something combustible inside the compartment and immediately started a fire. The mechanic bailed out and a shower of sparks, flames, and smoke was visible from the bottom access hatch to the compartment. A dark spot was observed on the outside of the fuselage adjacent to the compartment, which appeared to glow and turn red. The fire quickly burned through in this area. A Security Operations Officer notified the Airport Control Center who notified ARFF. The Control Center used

a remote control security camera to video tape the incident. At the same time the tower personnel also notified ARFF. Air carrier ramp personnel attempted to fight the fire with portable fire extinguishers. A large crowd of spectators gathered around the windows inside the terminal and were difficult to move. The air carriers objected to the order to evacuate the entire concourse.

Black smoke was observed coming the floor at the forward area of the cabin, by passengers and Flight Attendants. A Flight Attendant assigned to the forward area yelled, "Fire, evacuate through the back of the aircraft, move it, move it". This command was repeated several times. Smoke engulfed the entire interior within 60-90 seconds. Most of the passengers and cabin crew escaped out the rear airstairs before smoke poured out of the rear exit. The 68 year old male and his wife were the last ones out. They stated that it was difficult to open their eyes or breath due to the smoke. The Captain and First Officer escaped up the jetway and into the terminal. The Second Officer / Flight Engineer made it past the fire and escaped out the right overwing exit. He stated that he could not see his hand in front of his face and the intense smoke

forced him to crawl on the floor. He realized he would not be able to reach the rear door and started feeling the side walls for the overwing exit.

The fire penetrated through the passenger cabin floor and vented out the top of the aircraft prior to the arrival of ARFF. A total of five (5) airport ARFF units (two 1,500s and one 3,000) and nine (9) firefighters responded. A Battalion Chief, two engine companies, a ladder company, and a haz mat company also responded from off airport. A total of (12) fire apparatus and (31) fire personnel responded.

On arrival, heavy smoke was visible from the hole burned through the forward top area of the fuselage. One 1,500 unit positioned on the left side and the other 1,500 and the 3,000 units positioned on the right side. All three began to apply agent onto the top of the aircraft fuselage and burning jetway with turrets. Every time turret streams entered the hole in the top of the fuselage, vertical ventilation was interrupted and heavy smoke was observed from the horizontal openings on the aircraft, consisting of the rear air stairs, right overwing exit, and both open forward doors (L1 and R1)).

The IC ordered a switch to an interior attack. While one ARFF unit continued to discharge foam onto the outside of the aircraft, a fire officer off the 1,500 unit on the left side the aircraft, extended a 1 3/4 inch hose line up into the jetway and into the left forward door (L1). His intent was to establish interior sector command and begin interior fire attack. Two air carrier personnel assisted the fire officer with extending the hose line. He used full protective gear, the 95 gpm nozzle, and AFFF to control the interior fire. The interior fire was controlled 12 1/2 minutes after the initial call.