

of the first of seven back drafts that occurred on the inside of the aircraft. Two 3 foot by 3 foot ventilation holes were cut by the ladder crew. This task was very difficult due to the heat, smoke, and curved slippery surface of the top of the aircraft. A circular saw and hand tools were used to make the opening. Firefighters admitted that vertical ventilation would have been easier and safer from an aerial platform. Horizontal ventilation, that took advantage of the prevailing winds, was also established with fans, but reportedly had no noticeable affect. The remainder of the back drafts occurred at door L1.

As interior attack crews advanced through the aircraft, the double pane windows were easily knocked out with hand tools and provided additional horizontal cross ventilation. Firefighters were hampered by and became entangled in a web of wiring hanging down from the interior ceiling. During the entire firefighting operation, ARFF vehicles maintained a protective blanket of AFFF foam to the entire exterior of the aircraft. Total extinguishment and overhaul was achieved in 2 1/2 hours. The airport was closed during this entire time. Over one hundred firefighters were involved in the operation.

The flight crew was questioned early in the response regarding the type and location of hazardous cargo / dangerous goods on the aircraft. None were indicated. They stated the aircraft was only loaded with Class A materials, consisting of general cargo and mail. During overhaul, some blood and tissue samples were found that lacked the proper dangerous goods paperwork, packaging, and markings. Firefighters were decontaminated after exiting the aircraft. They were also monitored when rotated into the Rehab



Area.

The fire never self vented out the top of the aircraft. All holes in the top of the aircraft were cut by the ladder crew. ARFF vehicles were re-supplied with water and foam on scene. No firefighting vehicles ever left the scene to re-supply at fire stations or remote hydrants. The aircraft was towed off the runway and parked at a FBO. One ARFF unit and two firefighters maintained an overnight fire watch. Numerous minor hot spots were detected and extinguished throughout the night. Early in the incident, firefighters removed the mail from the lower cargo holds to waiting Postal Inspectors. Most of the cargo located in the main deck containers was destroyed. The engines, landing gear, and most of the control surfaces were salvaged and sold as parts.

All firefighters involved in interior operations utilized full turnouts and SCBA. Postal inspectors were affected by exposure to carbon monoxide (CO) while looking for damaged mail several days after the fire was extinguished. The post incident debrief emphasized the need for ARFF personnel to be trained in structural firefighting and off airport mutual aid

firefighters to be trained in ARFF procedures and aircraft and airport familiarization. Throughout the incident ARFF and mutual aid structural firefighters worked well together.

The regular foam applications to the exterior of the aircraft were totally unnecessary and a waste of expensive foam concentrate. As with virtually every aircraft interior fire, where the fire department is on scene, the fire never spreads to or involves the fuel tanks or fuel. Besides that, these firefighters proved that structural firefighting techniques are applicable to aircraft. If this had been a passenger aircraft fire with persons inside, these aggressive firefighters would have probably rescued most of them. The wing was covered with foam and still functioned as a good work surface to make entry and conduct interior firefighting operations. No firefighters slipped off the wing.

SOME CARGO AIRCRAFT INTERIOR FIRES THAT DID NOT GO AS WELL

Also in 1991, at another airport, a DC-8 cargo freighter crashed on takeoff. An exterior fuel spill fire