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REPRESENTING THE RAMP, OPERATIONS, PROVISIONING, AND FREIGHT AGENTS OF SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

Safety and Health Committee Bulletin

January 3, 2023

To: TWU Local 555 Members

From: TWU Local 555 Safety and Health Committee

Re: Safety Zone Accident Prevention

On December 31, 2022, American/Piedmont Airlines suffered an immeasurable tragedy at the Montgomery Regional Airport (KMGM) when one of their employees was ingested into the engine of an aircraft.

Though a lot of the details surrounding the accident have yet to be released, we do know that the aircraft involved in the accident was an Embraer E175 which is significantly smaller than the aircraft we work around every day. The engines on the 737 Max produce at least 10,000 lbs. more thrust than those of the E175. With that being said, it is important to keep the following things in mind when working around SWA's aircraft.

One of the best ways to ensure your safety while working on the ramp is to follow the safety procedures outlined in the Southwest Airlines Ground Operations Manual (GOM). According to the GOM:

“Southwest Airlines maintains a zone of safety around an aircraft. As the aircraft approaches, all personnel and materials must stay out of the safety zone until the Pilot cuts the engines and the Marshaller gives the Engines Cut, Clear to Enter the Safety Zone signal. This area must be kept clear during aircraft movement to prevent persons and/or materials from being ingested into the engine.”

The GOM offers the following tips to help you stay safe while working around engines on the ramp:

- Respect the power of aircraft engines.
- Never wear loose articles of clothing, which can act as a sail and pull a person into an engine.
- Increase safety margins by 20 percent in slippery or inclement weather conditions.
- Stay alert. Maintaining situational awareness is critical while working around aircraft. Remain focused on the job and watch out for other Employees who may not recognize the hazards posed by a jet engine.
- If an Employee feels an engine pulling him in, he should immediately drop to the ground and roll to the nose of the aircraft.

It is important to remember that the red flashing beacon lights on the underside of the plane indicate the aircraft is preparing to move. You should never enter the safety zone when the red light is flashing or if the engines are running. If the aircraft is not within a safety zone, or the parking spot does not have a clearly defined safety zone, you should never walk any closer than the wingtip when approaching from the side, and no further back than the nose gear when approaching from the front. When you look directly at the intake of the engine of a 737 you will notice spinner lines drawn on the center of the engine, these lines become clearer as the engine spools down. Always keep a safe distance from the engine until you can clearly see that the lines have stopped moving.

If you have any questions, please contact the TWU 555 Safety and Health Committee at safety@twu555.org