



AviationSafetyNetwork



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Accident

Status: Final
Date: 16 AUG 1987
Time: 20:45
Type: [McDonnell Douglas DC-9-82](#)
Operator: [Northwest Airlines](#)
Registration: N312RC
C/n / msn: 48090/1040
First flight: 1981
Total airframe hrs: 14928
Engines: 2 Pratt & Whitney JT8D-217
Crew: Fatalities: 6 / Occupants: 6
Passengers: Fatalities: 148 / Occupants: 149
Total: Fatalities: 154 / Occupants: 155
Ground casualties: Fatalities: 2
Airplane damage: Written off
Location: Detroit-Metropolitan Wayne County Airport, MI (DTW) ([United States of America](#))
[show on map](#)
Phase: Takeoff
Nature: Domestic Scheduled Passenger
Departure airport: [Detroit-Metropolitan Wayne County Airport, MI \(DTW\)](#), United States of America
Destination airport: [Phoenix-Sky Harbor International Airport, AZ \(PHX/KPHX\)](#), United States of America
Flightnumber: 255

languages:    

Narrative:

Flight 255 departed Saginaw for a flight to Detroit, Phoenix and Santa Ana, arriving at Detroit at 19:42. Pushback for departure was accomplished at 20:34 and the crew received taxi instructions for runway 3C. During the taxi out, the captain missed the turnoff at taxiway C and new taxi instructions were given. At 20:42 Flight 255 was told to taxi into position on runway 3C and hold, followed by a takeoff clearance two minutes later. Shortly after rotation the stick shaker (stall warning) activated. The aircraft rolled left and right and the left wing struck a light pole in a car rental lot. Flight 255 continued to roll to the left, continued across the car lot, struck a light pole in a second rental car lot and struck the side wall of the roof in a 90deg left wing down attitude. The plane was still rolling to the left when it impacted the ground on a road outside the airport boundary and continued to slide along the road, striking a railroad embankment, disintegrating and bursting into flames.

PROBABLE CAUSE: "The flight crew's failure to use the taxi checklist to ensure that the flaps and slats were extended for take-off. Contributing the the accident was the absence of electrical power to the airplane take-off warning system which thus did not warn the flight crew that the airplane was not configured properly for take-off. The

reason for the absence of electrical power could not be determined."

Events:

[Landing/takeoff - Takeoff - Wrong takeoff configuration \(flaps/trim\)](#)

[Result - Loss of control](#)

Sources:

AL250; NTSB/AAR-88/05 Aviation Week & Space Technology 1.5.89 (106)

[Sample newspaper article from Newspaperarchive.com](#)

» [Accident Investigation Report NTSB/AAR-88/05](#) [PDF 3,6 MB]

Statistics

3rd loss of a MD-80

2nd worst accident involving a MD-80 (at the time)

3rd worst accident involving a MD-80 (currently)

2nd worst accident in United States of America (at the time)

7th worst accident in United States of America (currently)

» [figures explained](#)

Photos



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