

Crash of TAM Linhas Aereas A320 at San Paulo



On July 17, 2007 a TAM Linhas Aereas Airbus A320-233 [PR-MBK], crashed at Intercity Congonhas Airport, Sao Paulo, Brazil at 1850 (2150 GMT). The aircraft was carrying 170 passengers 6 crew.

The aircraft on a scheduled passenger flight from Porto Alegre to Sao Paulo's intercity Congonhas Airport, crashed during landing on runway 35L (1939m/6362ft) in rainy weather conditions. The weather had been bad for much of the day and there had been persistent, heavy rain in the two hours preceding the accident.

According to media reports, the Airbus overran the wet runway, crossed a highway, and impacted a hangar occupied by courier service TAM Express. The aircraft and hangar were both engulfed in flames, and totally destroyed. While all 176 onboard were killed, reports indicate that a number of bystanders on the ground may have also been killed in the accident.



There has been concern for some time about safety at Congonhas during heavy rain. In February, briefly flights were banned in and out of the airport, which is the busiest in Brazil. Pilots had complained that water was pooling on the surface of the landing strip, making braking difficult and occasionally causing planes to skid out of control. Remedial work, including laying a new surface, has been carried out in recent months.

Some aviation experts questioned if the runway had been sufficiently grooved to drain water in heavy rains. "The runway was reopened because of popular pressure," Gianfranco Beting, an aviation consultant, said in a TV interview. "This was a tragedy waiting to happen."