

Continental Airlines flight makes emergency landing after severe turbulence encounter



On August 3, 2009, around 04:30 a.m., Continental Airways Flight 168, a Boeing 767-200 from Rio de Janeiro to Houston flying over southeast of Puerto Rico encountered severe turbulence resulting in injuries to more than thirty people on board. There were 168 passengers and 11 crew on board.

Dozens of those on board were tossed around violently, including several flight attendants, who were serving food items in the aisles at the time.

The crew made an emergency diversion and landed at Miami around 05:30 a.m. local time. Four received severe injuries and there were multiple lesser injuries. 28 individuals were treated at the airport on site and 9 were taken to hospitals.

In turbulence encounters, injuries have occurred mostly to those who did not buckle into their seats when the plane hit hazardous weather conditions. Passengers should always stay buckled up, even when the plane is flying smoothly, because turbulence can strike unexpectedly and cause serious spinal and limb injuries—or worse death.

According to FAA, turbulence is the “leading cause of injuries to airline passengers and flight attendants” in the U.S., with about 60 people per year getting hurt. Since 1980 there have been 198 incidents of turbulence in the U.S which resulted in 266 serious injuries and hundreds of other events where people were injured less seriously.

National Transportation Safety Board statistics show that turbulence accounted for 22 percent of all U.S. airline accidents from 1996 to 2005, and was responsible for 49 percent of the serious-injury accidents.