



FLYDUBAI PILOT REPORTED FATIGUE BEFORE PLANE CRASH

News / Airlines



The FlyDubai captain whose plane crashed in Russia on Saturday was due to leave the airline because of exhaustion, according to a report by the BBC.

The crash, which killed all 62 people on board, took place early in the morning on Saturday, just short of the runway at Rostov-on-Don airport runway.

"I don't want to speculate on what caused the crash, but I think that fatigue must have been a contributory factor. I'm also not surprised it happened," a FlyDubai pilot told BBC.

"Crew are overworked and suffering from fatigue. It is a significant risk. Staff are going from night to day shifts without enough rest in between. I would say 50% of the airline's workforce are suffering from acute fatigue."

Three FlyDubai staff members told BBC that captain Cypriot Aristos Sokratous had resigned and was finishing his three-month notice. He had cited fatigue and lifestyle as reasons for leaving.

At the time of the crash, hazardous conditions — including rain and winds of 30 to 50 mph — were reported at the airport.

The Boeing 737-800 flew four hours from Dubai to Rostov-on-Don airport. The plane's first landing

attempt had been aborted due to high winds and low visibility. Pilots circled the airport for two hours before making a second attempt at landing, which was captured by CCTV.

The footage shows the plane coming in at a steep angle and ending in an explosive crash. The plane missed the runway by more than 100 feet.

The pilots did not issue any distress calls before the crash CEO of FlyDubai Ghaith Al-Ghaith said.

Authorities located the plane's two black boxes, but they were badly damaged in the crash. It could be months they are able to paint a clearer picture of what exactly happened in the cockpit.

"We strictly follow authorized flying duty time regulations in compiling duty rosters, with special attention paid to the variables which affect our crews including report times, previous duty and the number of days off," FlyDubai said in a statement.

"If a member of flight crew feels that, for whatever reason, they have not been able to get enough rest before starting a shift, our Safety Management Systems, encourages pilots to declare themselves unfit to fly."

It's estimated that pilot fatigue is a factor in 15-20% of fatal aviation accidents caused by human error. It was listed as one of the causes of a TransAsia crash that killed 48 in July 2014.

In February, the European Aviation Safety Agency issued new shift limitations for European airlines, in an effort to combat pilot fatigue.

FlyDubai did not immediately respond to Mashable's request for comment.

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