NTSB ISSUES BRIEF UPDATE ON THE DELTA AIR LINES ACCIDENT AT LA GUARDIA

As part of its ongoing investigation into the accident at LaGuardia Airport on 5 March where Delta Air Lines flight 1086, which originated in Atlanta, Georgia, veered off the runway during landing, the NTSB released from Washington an investigative update the following day.

Shortly after the accident occurred, an NTSB investigator arrived on scene to secure the flight data recorder (FDR) and the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) from the accident aircraft as well as co-ordinate the NTSB’s investigative activities with local officials.

The recorders were returned to the NTSB Laboratory in Washington, DC late on 5 March and were being downloaded and auditioned on 6 March.

Two additional investigators arrived on scene in New York and include Dan Bower, a senior aviation accident investigator with the NTSB and the Investigator-in-Charge (IIC) of this accident. Accompanying the IIC was an airworthiness expert from the NTSB.

Since the accident the following has occurred:

- The airplane has been moved to a hangar for more detailed examination and further documentation by investigators.

- A second team of investigators with expertise in operations, human performance, and maintenance flew to Delta Air Lines’ headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, will conduct crew interviews and review the maintenance records for the accident airplane.

- The CVR was successfully downloaded. It contains two hours of good quality recordings and captured the entire flight.

- The FDR is a 25 hour tape-based recorder. It captured the entire flight and approximately 50 parameters of data, including things such as airspeed, altitude, heading, and information on engines and flight controls.

- The audition of the recorders is underway and factual data from the recorders will be released when available.
Parties to the investigation include the Federal Aviation Administration, Delta Air Lines, the Air Line Pilots’ Association, Boeing, and Pratt & Whitney.

It was reported in the press that the aircraft, a McDonnell Douglas MD-88, skidded off the runway in snow and hit a fence before coming to rest in a position overlooking the icy waters of Flushing Bay. It is understood that all 127 passengers and five crew were evacuated safely.