



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 2, 2018

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Cybele L. Thompson, RPA, FMA, CCIM, LEED AP, Director Real Estate Assets
via Ronald H. Villa, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Internal Operations

SUBJECT: Aircraft Safety at City of San Diego Airports – Montgomery-Gibbs Executive
Airport and Brown Field Municipal Airport

This memorandum is written to discuss safety protocols at the two City Airports – Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport (MYF) and Brown Field Municipal Airport (SDM), in light of two (2) recent fatal aircraft crashes near MYF.

Background

On December 9, 2017, a Beechcraft Bonanza took off from MYF at approximately 4:30 PM. Approximately 1.5 miles west of the airport, the pilot reported a loss of engine power and attempted an emergency landing at or near Olive Grove Park in Clairemont. The pilot successfully made it to the park, but, unfortunately, did not stop until hitting a house and catching fire. Two (2) people on the aircraft died and two (2) were seriously injured. A dog in the home also died as a result of the crash. (See Attachment 1.)

On February 21, 2018, a Cirrus SR22 took off from MYF at 6:30 AM. Shortly after takeoff, the aircraft crashed near the intersection of Ruffin Road and Ridgehaven Court in Kearny Mesa, killing the pilot, who was the only occupant. The accident is being investigated by the National Transportation and Safety Board (NTSB).

As a result of the two accidents, constituents living in the vicinity of MYF have expressed an elevated sense of concern about the safety of aircraft operations at and near MYF, in addition to their longstanding concerns about noise and overflights associated with aircraft using MYF.

History of Fatal Aircraft Accidents at MYF and SDM

Reviewing the NTSB Aircraft Accident Database reveals that since 1983, there have been ten (10) fatal aircraft accidents at or near MYF, resulting 21 fatalities. During that same time period, there have been 13 fatal aircraft accidents at or near SDM, resulting in 33 fatalities. Nearly half of the fatalities (15) at SDM were the result of two (2) accidents that involved turbo jet aircraft taking off at night and hitting Otay Mountain, east of SDM.

None of the accident reports for either airport named an airport deficiency as a contributing factor in any fatal accident.

U.S. Transportation Fatalities

According to the most recent NTSB report of U.S. Transportation Fatalities by Mode, in 2016, there were 37,461 highway fatalities, 733 rail fatalities, 730 marine (shipping) fatalities, 412 aviation fatalities, and 16 pipeline fatalities. Of the 412 aviation-related fatalities, 386 were related to general aviation – the type that operate out of MYF and SDM. Statistically, the only mode of transportation safer than aviation is pipeline. (See Attachment 2.)

MYF and SDM Operations

An airport operation is defined as a takeoff or a landing. A touch and go, where pilots practice landings and takeoffs in a fairly continuous loop in the airport traffic pattern, is considered two (2) operations. Operations are only counted by the control tower when the control tower is open. At MYF, the FAA control tower is open between 6:00 AM – 9:00 PM daily. At SDM, the FAA control tower is open between 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM daily. Aircraft may operate when the tower is closed, but the operations will not be counted in the official traffic count. The ten (10)-year history of operations at City Airports are listed below:

	MYF	SDM
2017	207,103	77,355
2016	200,676	86,027
2015	216,295	93,529
2014	215,114	90,266
2013	186,192	89,707
2012	182,455	92,043
2011	193,341	101,117
2010	185,506	91,025
2009	193,707	92,262
2008	233,744	109,882
Total	2,014,133	923,213

During this 10-year time period, there were three (3) aircraft fatalities at MYF out of over 2 million operations. At SDM, there were 11 aircraft fatalities out of over 900,000 operations. The February 21, 2018 crash at MYF was not counted because the February operations traffic count will not be completed until March.

Safety Protocols at City Airports

MYF and SDM are operated by the Airports Division (Airports) which is part of the Real Estate Assets Department (READ). The primary purpose of Airports is to operate MYF and SDM safely and efficiently in accordance with all pertinent local, state and federal regulations. In order to achieve this, Airports utilizes several guiding documents, operational procedures and public interaction. Guiding documents include, but are not limited to: San Diego Municipal Code Article 8, Division 1 “Airports”; Airports Division Operations Policies and Procedures; Minimum Operating Standards for Commercial Aeronautical Services and Non-Commercial Flying Club Activities; Annual Airports Division Business Plan; and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Grant Assurances and FAA Advisory Circulars.

Additionally, the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for San Diego County, the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority (SDCRAA), adopts Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCPs) that identify policies and requirements applicable to new development surrounding local public use airports, including MYF and SDM in accordance with California Public Utilities Code sections 21670-21679.5. The City has the authority to determine ALUCP consistency for certain actions in the Airport Land Use Compatibility Overlay Zone (ALUCOZ) and is required by state law to submit other specified actions to SDCRAA for an ALUCP consistency determination prior to final approval by the City.

The Airports Division is led by Accredited Airport Executives with professional depth and breadth in aviation in general and airport operations in particular. The Airports team employs 11 Operations and Maintenance staff who inspect each airport daily to ensure airport infrastructure and the aeronautical environment around each airport are in absolute compliance with all standards and are clear of hazards and obstructions.

As was stated above, both MYF and SDM have Air Traffic Control Towers (ATCT) that are operated daily by the FAA. These Air Traffic Control Towers provide an enhanced layer of safety for each airport by separating and sequencing arriving and departing air traffic. Pilots and Air Traffic Controllers communicating helps to create a safer environment.

Immediately following any aircraft incident, such as the recent mishaps at MYF, the airport is closed or its use restricted until it is inspected prior to resuming unrestricted aircraft operations. Areas of the airport that are deemed unsafe are closed until they can be cleared or repaired, bringing the airport back into complete compliance with all guiding documents and directives.

Annually, Caltrans Aeronautics conducts a safety and compliance inspection of each airport on behalf of the FAA. The Caltrans inspector checks the aircraft operating area, approach and departure corridors to ensure standards are adhered to, and reviews appropriate airport records for currency. The most recent results of the Caltrans Aeronautics Inspection for SDM states that the airport is in excellent condition with no discrepancies noted. For MYF, the inspection results state that several bushes along Runway 28R need to be removed and that on Runway 5 there are no obstructions, therefore airport should consider removing the displaced threshold. The bushes along Runway 28R have been removed and as part of the MYF Master Plan Study, the displaced threshold for Runway 5 will be evaluated with a subsequent recommendation made.

Summary

Both Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport and Brown Field Airport are managed safely and efficiently, ensuring that all required standards are met.

The Deputy Director for Airports, Rod Propst, would be pleased to set up tours at both or one of the City's airports for any interested persons. Mr. Propst also would be happy to brief any Council Member on Airport Operations or any other airport topic at their convenience.

CT/rnp

Attachments: 1. NTSB Preliminary Accident Report – 12/9/2017
2. NTSB US Transportation Fatalities in 2016 – by Mode

cc: Aimee Faucett, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Kris Michell, Chief Operating Officer
Stacey LoMedico, Assistant Chief Operating Officer
Rolando Charvel, Chief Financial Officer
Andrea Tevlin, Independent Budget Analyst
Ronald H. Villa, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Internal Operations
David Graham, Ronald H. Villa, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Neighborhood Services
Paz Gomez, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Public Works
Chief Brian Fennessy, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department
Chief David Nisleit, San Diego Police Department
Judy von Kalinowski, Director, Human Resources
Katie Keach, Director, Communications
Jessica Lawrence, Director of Finance Policy & Council Affairs, Office of the Mayor
Rod Propst, Airports, Deputy Director
Wayne Reiter, Airports, Program Manager



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Preliminary Report

Location:	San Diego, CA	Accident Number:	WPR18FA046
Date & Time:	12/09/2017, 1633 PST	Registration:	N248SB
Aircraft:	BEECH A36	Injuries:	2 Fatal, 2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

On December 9, 2017 about 1633 Pacific standard time, a Beech A36, N248SB, was destroyed when it impacted a residential house following an emergency landing near Montgomery - Gibbs Executive Airport (MYF), San Diego, California. The pilot and one passenger sustained serious injuries. Two other passengers were fatally injured. The airplane was registered to Altitude Aviation Inc. and operated by the pilot under the provisions of 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 as a personal flight. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the flight, and a visual flight rules plan was filed for the cross-country flight to Los Angeles, California. The flight originated from MYF about 1630.

The pilot reported that about 1.5 miles west of the airport, at 700 ft above ground level, the engine experienced a complete loss of power. He executed a steep 180° turn to the right and performed the emergency procedure for loss of engine power. Engine power was not regained and he executed a forced landing to a nearby field. During landing, the pilot applied brakes, but due to an insufficient stopping distance, the airplane impacted and traveled through a fence before colliding with the residence. A post-crash fire ensued.

A witness located about 0.15 miles from the accident site recorded a video that showed the airplane in a steep right bank. The landing gear was extended and visible. The airplane briefly disappeared from the line of sight and a second later, it touched down in the middle of a school yard.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	BEECH	Registration:	N2485B
Model/Series:	A36 UNDESIGNAT	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:	No		
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KMYF, 417 ft msl	Observation Time:	0053 UTC
Distance from Accident Site:	2 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	26° C / -8° C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	3 knots, 50°
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility:	10 Miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.12 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Departure Point:	SAN DIEGO, CA (MYF)	Destination:	Los Angeles, CA

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal, 1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal, 2 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	32.825000, -117.170556 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Maja Smith

Additional Participating Persons:

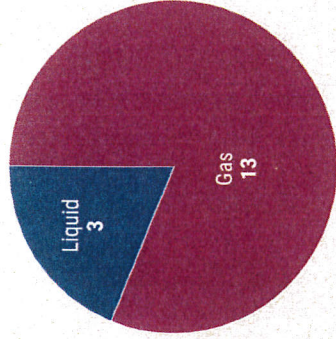
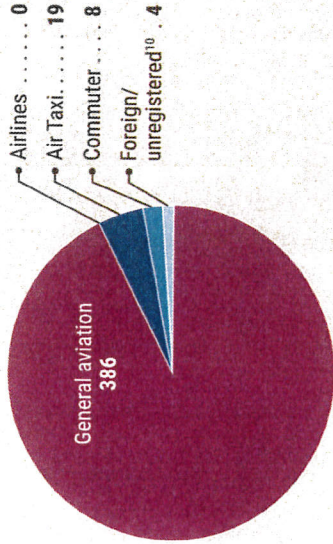
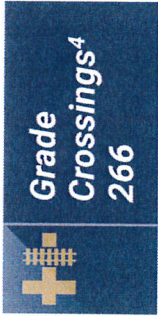
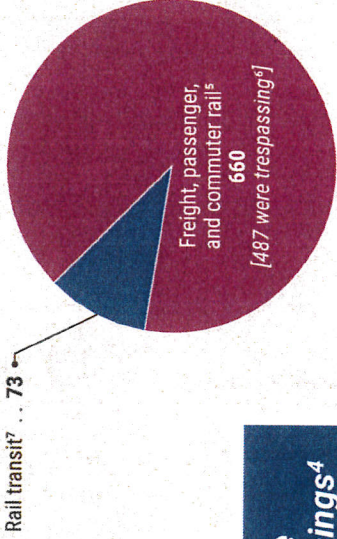
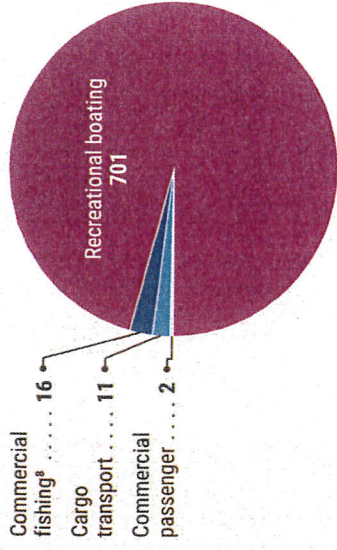
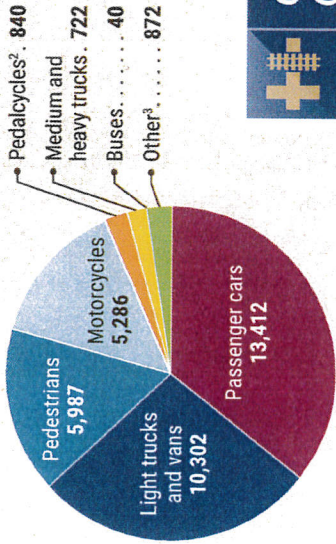
Note: The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.



National Transportation Safety Board

US Transportation Fatalities in 2016¹ – by Mode

Total: 39,339



Footnotes

- Numbers for 2016 are preliminary estimates. Aviation data are from the NTSB; marine data are reported by the US Department of Homeland Security; all other data are reported by the US Department of Transportation.
- Pedalcycles include bicycles and other cycles.
- Other refers to non-occupants (excluding pedestrians and pedalcyclists) and occupants in other or unknown vehicle types.
- Grade crossing fatalities are reported as a separate category but should not be added to the total because they are included in the highway and rail fatalities as appropriate.
- Freight, passenger, and commuter rail data are reported by the Federal Railroad Administration.
- Trespassing fatalities are reported as a separate category but should not be added to the total because they are included in the freight, passenger, and commuter rail fatalities. Trespassing fatalities are not available for rail transit.
- Rail transit data are reported by the Federal Transit Administration and include fatalities involving heavy rail, light rail, cable car, inclined plane, monorail/automated guideway, streetcar rail, and hybrid rail.
- Commercial fishing refers to operational fatalities.
- Total fatalities may not equal the sum of each category because accidents may involve multiple categories.
- Foreign/unregistered includes non-US registered aircraft involved in accidents in the United States.