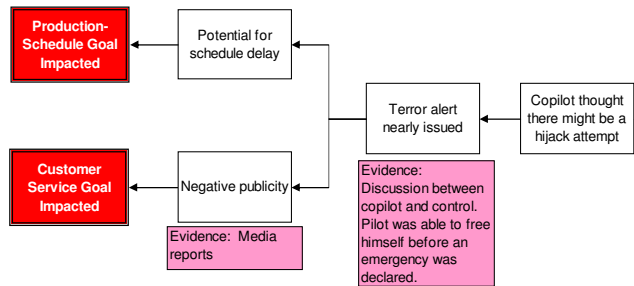


Pilot Locked in Bathroom Nearly Results in Terror Alert

Flight inbound to NYC
November 17, 2011

On November 18, 2011, a pilot accidentally got locked inside a bathroom just prior to landing at LaGuardia. This incident almost resulted in an emergency being declared and terrorist alert being issued.

In this example, the copilot considered declaring an emergency because the pilot was gone from the cockpit longer than expected and an unknown man with an accent knocked on the cockpit door. The copilot was concerned that this might be a potential hijacking attempt. His concern was caused by the intended destination being NYC and the 9/11 attacks that occurred there 10 years ago.



The pilot was taking longer than normal because the bathroom door lock had jammed when he had tried to exit after a bathroom break. The unknown man was a well-intended passenger who had heard the pilot calling for help. The pilot had given him the password to access the cockpit because all other crew members were inside the cockpit. There were two reasons that all other crew members were inside the cockpit. First, regulations require that at least 2 crew members are inside the cockpit at all times. Second this was a small airplane staffed with only 3 crew members. If the pilot or copilot needed to use the restroom, the only flight attendant had to enter the cockpit to meet the rules.

Luckily, the pilot was eventually able to free himself from the bathroom and return to the cockpit before anything too exciting happened. The plane landed as scheduled. The FBI and Port Authority cops met the plane, but after briefly talking to the passenger involved it was quickly determined that nothing suspicious had occurred.

