

Beat: News

14 injured as severe turbulence hits Seoul-Dallas flight

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USPA News - Fourteen people were injured Tuesday when severe turbulence hit an American Airlines passenger plane during a flight from Seoul to Dallas, forcing it to divert to Tokyo where five of those injured were hospitalized, airline officials said. None of the injuries were life-threatening.

The incident occurred on board American Airlines Flight 280 after it had taken off from Incheon International Airport in Seoul for an 11-hour flight to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport in Texas. The Boeing 777-200 aircraft was carrying 240 passengers and 15 crew members when it was hit by severe turbulence during the flight. Flight 280 was diverted to Narita International Airport in Tokyo due to the incident. Fourteen of those on board requested medical attention, though only five were taken to hospital for non-life-threatening injuries. "Medical personnel have been able to evaluate all passengers and crew members asking for medical attention," airline spokeswoman Andrea Huguely said. "Four passengers and one crew member have been transported to local hospitals for further observation and treatment." Passengers who were not hospitalized were transported to area hotels and were expected to continue their travel to Texas on Wednesday. "Our team in Tokyo will continue to provide all necessary support to take care of our passengers and crew," Huguely added in an e-mailed statement. Turbulence is caused by an irregular motion of air and brings about rapid bumps or jolts to an aircraft, which can cause an aircraft to momentarily lose control in severe cases. Turbulence may occur in the vicinity of thunderstorms where strong upward and downward motions of air can occur, but turbulence can also happen in clear air regions where air masses with different speeds, directions or temperatures meet. Aviation experts have urged passengers to keep their seatbelt on throughout the flight, even when it is not mandatory, as most of those who get injured by severe turbulence are not using their seatbelt. In mid-October, 8 passengers and 14 crew members were injured when severe turbulence hit a Singapore Airlines passenger plane while it was landing in the Indian city of Mumbai. It followed similar incidents of severe turbulence over the past year, including an incident in July in which 25 passengers and 3 crew members were injured on board a South African Airways flight en-route to Hong Kong.

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