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The details of 40 animal deaths, injuries, losses aboard US airlines



By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

GLOBE STAFF MARCH 15, 2018

The following information comes from redacted incident reports submitted to the federal transportation department.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 252

Date: 1/6/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: Mastiff

Animal name: Shyla

Description of incident: Injury

Cause of Incident: While being removed from the aircraft, the pet carrier fell approximately 2 feet to the ground.

Corrective action taken: Reviewed standard operating procedure with ramp personnel to prevent recurrence.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 1232

Date: 1/12/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Other

Animal name: -

Description of incident: 2 Geckos were discovered deceased upon arrival at RDU

Cause of Incident: Cause of death is undetermined. No medical exam was performed

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required

Carrier: United

Flight number: 813

Date: 1/16/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: Other

Animal name: Libby

Description of incident: Injury

Cause of Incident: Dog clawed at shipping container while in transit, causing injury to its paw

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required. Injury was self inflicted

Carrier: United

Flight number: 2022

Date: 1/21/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Other

Animal name: Rocco

Description of incident: Death

Cause of Incident: According to medical exam, the dog died of a cardiac abnormality due to a congenital heart disease.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required. Dog died of natural causes.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 1223

Date: 1/28/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: American-Shorthair

Animal name: Hope

Description of incident: Death

Cause of Incident: Pet owner declined medical exam and suspected this 9 year old cat had heart failure.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 1527

Date: 2/4/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: Rhodesian Ridgeback

Animal name: Sylas

Description of incident: Self-inflicted injury to paws

Cause of Incident: Self inflicted injury to paws caused by clawing at shipping container during transit

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required: injury was self-inflicted

Carrier: Alaska

Flight number: 894

Date: 2/21/17

Type: Loss

Description of animal: Other

Animal name: Gaige

Description of incident: During ground transfer from the air cargo acceptance facility to the aircraft for loading, a cat was able to escape its kennel and out of the enclosed cart, while on the AOA at the Honolulu Int'l Airport. The Agent driving the cart with the animal noticed the empty kennel with front door ajar once planeside after opening the cart's curtains. The Agent immediately contacted his supervisor, coordinating with local airport Wildlife and Animal Quarantine representatives to assist in the search and utilize traps to secure the cat. The shipper was contacted

immediately to inform of the escape and to return to assist in the search. To this point, the cat has not been located.

Cause of Incident: After a full investigation of cargo acceptance records, employee interviews, kennel condition, and handling procedures, we are currently unable to determine the root cause of the escape. Primary animal enclosure standards were met and additional company-directed security measures were applied (releasable zip-ties) at time of acceptance.

Corrective action taken: While no direct corrective action was determined, our team in Honolulu has committed to reinforcing existing company and regulatory policies regarding the acceptance of live animals for air transport

Carrier: United

Flight number: 1527

Date: 3/13/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Bull Terrier

Animal name: Sadie

Description of incident: Discovered deceased upon arrival at Denver, CO

Cause of Incident: Post mortem exam attributed primary cause of death to gastric dilation

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required: death was from natural cause.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 829

Date: 3/21/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Abyssinian

Animal name: Riko

Description of incident: Death

Cause of Incident: 3 year old dog escaped its shipping container during acceptance process. It evaded capture and was struck by an oncoming vehicle.

Corrective action taken: United will review existing procedures to enhance security of animal during acceptance process.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 105

Date: 4/26/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Pug

Animal name: Domi

Description of incident: 11 year old Pug discovered deceased upon arrival in Brazil.

Cause of Incident: Pet owner refused medical exam to determine actual cause of death. Therefore the cause of death is unknown.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required. Cause of death is undetermined.

Carrier: American

Flight number: 316

Date: 5/27/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Golden Retriever

Animal name: Unknown

Description of incident: Checked pet traveling on flight AA316 arrived in SJU 23:43 local time. Upon arrival in SJU it was discovered that checked pet had arrived deceased. The pet was taken to a local veterinarian for a necropsy

Cause of Incident: None at this time

Corrective action taken: -

Carrier: United

Flight number: 929

Date: 6/17/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: German Shepherd Dog

Animal name: Koda

Description of incident: Injury

Cause of Incident: One year old German Shepherd dog had apparently caused injury to its toe nails by clawing at interior of its wooden shipping container. He was evaluated and cleared to complete his journey.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required. Injury was self inflicted.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 434

Date: 6/24/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Spanish Alano

Animal name: Chocofan

Description of incident: Death

Cause of Incident: 2 yr old Spanish Alano mix arrived deceased from Newark, NJ to Orlando, FL. medical exam confirmed the cause of death as gastric dilation volvulus and torsion (gdvt)

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required

Carrier: United

Flight number: 1899

Date: 6/29/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

Animal name: Billy

Description of incident: Injury

Cause of Incident: 7 month old Cavalier King Charles Spaniel caused injury to its toe nails by clawing at interior of its plastic shipping container.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required: injury was self-inflicted

Carrier: United

Flight number: 83

Date: 7/5/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Labrador Retriever

Animal name: Tank

Description of incident: 12 year old Labrador Mixed Breed dog was discovered deceased upon arrival on a flight from Delhi, India to Newark, New Jersey

Cause of Incident: Gross diagnosis of medical exam concluded cause of death could not be determined by pathologic examination

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken

Carrier: United

Flight number: 383

Date: 7/13/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: American-Shorthair

Animal name: Oliver

Description of incident: 11year old cat arrived deceased to Denver, CO after traveling from Guam via Honolulu.

Cause of Incident: Medical exam (necropsy) attributed cause of death to heart failure

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required

Carrier: Alaska

Flight number: 757

Date: 7/18/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

Animal name: Chillie

Description of incident: On arrival in Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, ramp personnel working flight AS757 inbound from New Orleans International Airport reported that a seven year old female cavalier spaniel named Chillie was not moving and appeared to be lifeless. Alaska Airlines management personnel informed the owners and were given approval to conduct a necropsy. The histopathology report states the cause of death to be most likely acute cardiac arrest potentially associated with early subclinical cardiac insufficiency found during the necropsy. No evidence of trauma, infectious disease, or any struggling was reported in histopathology report.

Cause of Incident: On arrival in Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, ramp personnel working flight AS757 inbound from New Orleans International Airport reported that a seven year old female cavalier spaniel named Chillie was not moving and appeared to be lifeless. There is no evidence to suggest that the airline's handling contributed to the animal's death.

Corrective action taken: No corrective actions required.

Carrier: Alaska

Flight number: 894

Date: 7/21/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Shiba Inu

Animal name: Ponzu

Description of incident: On arrival into SEA on its scheduled flight from HNL, ramp agents reported a dog in a standard kennel in good condition, had attempted to exit the kennel by chewing through the upper left portion of the kennel above the grate door. During the likely attempt at exiting the kennel, the dog had made a large enough hole to push their head through but became trapped while exiting. It appears that during this process the animal had asphyxiated itself when they became stuck in the narrow hole. Ramp agents contacted the cargo management personnel who worked with the passenger on final handling of the animal.

Cause of Incident: On arrival from AS894 from HNL-SEA, a three year old Shiba Inu named Ponzu was reported to be unresponsive by ramp personnel. There is no evidence to suggest that the airline's handling contributed to the animal's death.

Corrective action taken: No corrective actions required.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 384

Date: 7/24/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: Collie

Animal name: Willow

Description of incident: 9 year old Collie arrived injured after traveling aboard a non-stop flight from San Francisco, CA to Philadelphia, PA

Cause of Incident: The dog had been chewing on its shipping container , thereby causing injury to itself

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required. Injury was self inflicted

Carrier: United

Flight number: 1815

Date: 8/6/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

Animal name: Lulu

Description of incident: 4 year old dog arrived deceased to San Francisco, CA. Medical exam (necropsy) attributed cause of death to heat stroke.

Cause of Incident: 3 animals were on board flight 1815; the other 2 animals were healthy upon arrival into San Francisco, CA.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken

Carrier: Delta

Flight number: 645

Date: 8/14/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Other

Animal name: -

Description of incident: On August 14, 2017 a kitten was accepted for transport in Indianapolis, Indiana destined for Bozeman, Montana with a transfer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The kitten was accepted in apparent good health with all documentation and kenneling requirements met. The kitten was loaded on the originating flight with no

irregularities. Upon arrival in Minneapolis the kitten was unloaded and taken to the animal holding area. At the time the kitten was picked up to be dispatched for the next flight the local staff in Minneapolis noticed the kitten unresponsive. The station staff in Minneapolis transported the kitten to local Veterinary services for evaluation. Veterinary services determined the kitten was deceased.

Cause of Incident: According to the Necropsy provided by the University of Minnesota the kitten died from enteritis caused by intestinal feline corona virus with secondary spiral bacteria.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken. The kitten suffered from pre-existing medical conditions.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 2053

Date: 8/14/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: Australian Shepherd

Animal name: Ajax

Description of incident: 2 year old Australian Shepherd arrived injured in San Francisco, CA.

Cause of Incident: Dog caused injury to its toe nails by clawing at interior of its shipping container. He was evaluated and cleared to complete his journey.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required. Injury was self-inflicted.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 1928

Date: 8/14/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: Belgian Malinois

Animal name: Rock

Description of incident: 3.5 year old Belgian Malinois shipped from Boston, MA (BOS) to Newark, NJ (EWR) arrived with injuries.

Cause of Incident: Dog injured self while escaping from plastic shipping container during flight. Vet report "revealed Rock to be laterally recumbent..." with bruising on his abdomen area.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required. Injury was self-inflicted.

Carrier: Delta

Flight number: 1537

Date: 8/25/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Australian Shepherd

Animal name: -

Description of incident: On August 25, 2017 an Aussie Shepherd puppy was accepted for transport in Kansas City, Missouri destined for Providence, Rhode Island with a transfer in Detroit, Michigan. The puppy was accepted in apparent good health with all documentation and kenneling requirements met. The puppy was loaded on the originating flight with no irregularities along with three other animal shipments. Upon arrival in Detroit the puppy was unloaded and noticed unresponsive. The station staff in Detroit transported the puppy to a local Veterinarian. Veterinary services determined the puppy was deceased. The puppy was then transported to Michigan State University in order for a necropsy to be performed.

Cause of Incident: According to the necropsy provided by Michigan State University the puppy died from acute myocardial necrosis

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken

Carrier: United

Flight number: 1917

Date: 9/11/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: Shiba Inu

Animal name: Ume

Description of incident: 6.5 year old dog arrived with self-inflicted injuries in Austin, TX.

Cause of Incident: Medical exam confirmed dog caused self-inflicted injury to nose and nail beds during flight.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken

Carrier: American

Flight number: 1129

Date: 9/12/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: Poodle

Animal name: -

Description of incident: The employee that brought the dog to BSO noticed feces and blood marks on the dog but could not inspect further due to the kennel being zipped tied closed. The employee contacted the owner on what he had observed and the owner proceeded to open the kennel. As the dog was being led away to the pet relief area, the dog had a bowel movement of feces and blood near the carousel.

Cause of Incident: Owner stated landing was very rough and the dog may have been touselled around. Unknown if kennel was secured in the cargo compartment.

Corrective action taken: Unknown

Carrier: United

Flight number: 876

Date: 9/26/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Pug

Animal name: Bella

Description of incident: 8 year old pug was discovered deceased upon arrival in San Francisco, CA.

Cause of Incident: Preliminary diagnosis of medical exam concluded cause of death could not be determined, however, there was an indication of preexisting heart disease, which may have contributed to sudden heart failure.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken

Carrier: United

Flight number: 1526

Date: 9/26/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: Other

Animal name: Lexus

Description of incident: Before leaving origin, 4 year old American Pit Bull Terrier was found to have self-inflicted injuries prior to boarding.

Cause of Incident: The dog attempted to escape by chewing on its shipping container. Medical exam confirmed the dog fractured three teeth, and experienced oral bruising. Dog was returned to owner and did not fly.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken

Carrier: United

Flight number: 396

Date: 9/29/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: Boxer

Animal name: Peanut Butter

Description of incident: 8-year-old dog arrived with self-inflicted injuries in San Francisco, CA.

Cause of Incident: Dog caused injury to its fifth digit toe nail during flight. He was evaluated and cleared to complete his journey.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 1473

Date: 9/30/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Other

Animal name: Hope

Description of incident: 1 year old American Bully was discovered deceased upon arrival in Newark, NJ from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Cause of Incident: Preliminary exam was inconclusive; pathology is still pending. Cause of death is unknown at this time.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken

Carrier: United

Flight number: 155

Date: 10/10/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Irish Water Spaniel

Animal name: Trek

Description of incident: 2.5 year old dog discovered deceased upon arrival in Marshall Islands

Cause of Incident: Dog was transported to Oahu for the medical exam, "None of the (autolytic) changes indicate a definitive cause for the death of this animal...The cause of death in this case is undetermined."

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken.

Carrier: Delta

Flight number: 1267

Date: 10/11/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: Other

Animal name: Brady

Description of incident: A pet dog "Brady" was accepted in Tampa, FL (TPA) for transport to Bermuda, VI (BDA). The canine was accepted in apparent good health with all documentation present. Brady was then transported from Tampa cargo to the aircraft for loading and staged in a ventilated area under shelter. The curtain of the transport cart was opened to allow air movement; the agent saw the dog had chewed through the metal door of the kennel and was outside of the kennel but in the transport conveyance. Before the agent could react to corral the dog, Brady jumped through the opened transport and escaped. The aircraft loading team immediately alerted airport authorities and local air carrier leadership of the event to begin search and rescue efforts. Brady was ultimately located and recovered on 26OCT by Animal Control on the Tampa airport property. Animal Control released Brady to the owners who took her to a local veterinarian for injuries sustained while escaping the kennel.

Cause of Incident: The canine suffered self-inflicted injuries during its efforts to chew its way out of the primary conveyance.

Corrective action taken: -

Carrier: American

Flight number: 1090

Date: 10/16/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: German Shepherd Dog

Animal name: Kora

Description of incident: Upon arrival of Flight 1090, the ground crew found the dog outside of the kennel with no visible signs of movement. It was also observed that a large hole was chewed through the side of the kennel.

Cause of Incident: Cause of death is undetermined, a necropsy performed by local VCA Animal Hospital.

Corrective action taken: N/A

Carrier: United

Flight number: 1989

Date: 10/23/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Devon-Rex

Animal name: Tabby

Description of incident: 8 week old kitten was discovered deceased upon arrival in Chicago, IL

Cause of Incident: Medical exam attributed cause of death to anxiety, limiting the oxygen flow in the respiratory system.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 2405

Date: 10/23/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Staffordshire Bull Terrier

Animal name: Mambo

Description of incident: During the pet's layover, he appeared to be in distress, and was immediately transported to the vet. Dog became non-responsive at the time of arrival at hospital.

Cause of Incident: Medical exam indicated he suffered from a cardiac dysfunction, which contributed to the death.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 1682

Date: 11/3/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: Mastiff

Animal name: Hirtsy

Description of incident: Dog arrived in Chicago, IL with self-inflicted injuries to nails, gum, and tongue.

Cause of Incident: Dog clawed and chewed on wooden kennel during the duration of the first leg. Vet cleared dog to continue travel in metal kennel.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken. Injuries were self-inflicted.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 1126

Date: 12/14/17

Type: Injury

Description of animal: Chow Chow

Animal name: Timber

Description of incident: Dog arrived in Anchorage, AK with self-inflicted injury to front, right paw.

Cause of Incident: Dog clawed the kennel during the duration of the second leg. After being evaluated, the dog was returned to owner.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken. Injuries were self-inflicted.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 0534

Date: 12/21/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Other

Animal name: Unknown

Description of incident: One of four pet Conure birds was discovered deceased at kenneling facility during layover.

Cause of Incident: The cause of death is unknown

Corrective action taken: No corrective action required. The cause of death is undetermined.

Carrier: United

Flight number: 1773

Date: 12/22/17

Type: Death

Description of animal: Bulldog

Animal name: Bator

Description of incident: Dog discovered deceased upon arrival in Newark, NJ.

Cause of Incident: Medical Exam (Necropsy) still pending.

Corrective action taken: No corrective action taken

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation

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