

LOKAÐ MEÐ BÓKUN

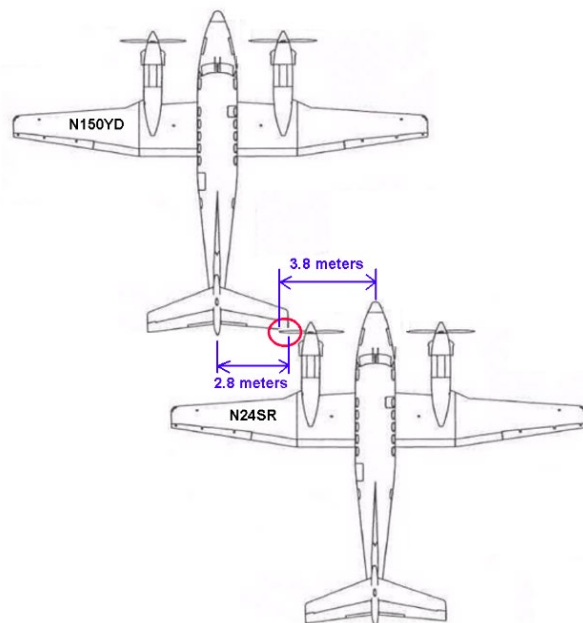
Case no.: **24-011F005**

Date: **11. February 2024**

Location: **Over the Vestmannaeyjar islands**

Description: **Midair collision**

Aircraft N24SR and N150YD (both King Air B200) were being ferry flown across the North-Atlantic Ocean. They had departed Belfast (EGAA) at around 14:00 UTC¹ time and planned to land at Keflavik (BIKF) at 17:15. On board aircraft N24SR there was a single pilot. On board aircraft N150YD there was a pilot, accompanied by one passenger.



At 15:56 the pilot of aircraft N24SR informed ATC (Oceanic) that the two company aircraft planned to go VFR after waypoint ALDAN (located about 25 NM south of the town of Vík in south Iceland). At this time the aircraft were located more than 150 NM eastsoutheast of waypoint ALDAN, flying at FL280 and FL260.

¹ All times in the booking are UTC

At 16:02 the pilot of aircraft N150YD called ATC to advise that they would be looking into cancelling IFR soon and enter formation. At this time N24SR was flying at FL280 and aircraft N150YD at FL260, 10 NM apart, around 130 NM eastsoutheast of waypoint ALDAN.

At 16:12 the pilot of aircraft N150YD called ATC and requested to join up with his colleague (N24SR) and cancel IFR. At this time N150YD was still flying at FL260 and was located about 83 NM eastsoutheast of waypoint ALDAN, while aircraft N24SR was still at FL280 and was located about 78 NM eastsoutheast of waypoint ALDAN.

This was answered with the following reply from ATC:

„150YD, actually I cannot allow that because of airspace restrictions. You can only be VFR at or below FL195 in about 10 to 15 minutes. So you can expect to just get radar vectoring and descent we need 5 miles radar separation from your company and once you are below 195 I will call you when you can cancel.“

At 16:19 the pilot of aircraft N24SR requested to descend towards Vestmannaeyjar in order to get out of class A airspace. Additional communications took place between the two aircraft and ATC that they would need to clear class A airspace and descend to FL190 before they could cancel IFR. Both aircraft were then cleared to descend to FL190 and requested that they be informed when they could cancel IFR.

At 16:26 the pilot of aircraft N24SR contacted ATC and notified that he was down to FL190. The aircraft was located 27 NM southeast of the town of Vik and had cleared class A airspace. ATC accepted IFR cancellation for aircraft N24SR.

At 16:27 the pilot of aircraft N150YD also contacted ATC, informing that he was also at FL190. ATC cancelled IFR for aircraft N150YD.

Both aircraft were now flying under VFR.

At 16:31 the pilot of aircraft N150YD contacted ATC to advise that they were in formation. Their separation was now down to just under 2 NM, 2000 feet apart.

SIA-Iceland analysed the formation flight of aircraft N150YD and N24SR. By 16:33 the gap between the two aircraft had reduced down to 0.01 NM and for the next nine minutes it remained between 0.01 NM and 0.03 NM (18 to 56 meters), as the aircraft flew past Vík and Skógar. When the aircraft were flying south of Eyjafjallajökull at FL168, at 16:38, they turned to the left and headed southwest towards the Vestmannaeyjar islands while continuing their descent.

According to the pilots, the weather conditions around Vestmannaeyjar islands were CAVOK with over 50 km visibility and a very thin cirrus cloud layer was above, with clear bright sunshine.

At 16:42:06, as the aircraft were flying towards the southwest at FL 138, while located about 1.5 NM north of Heimaey of the Vestmannaeyjar island, the 0.01 NM distance between them started to close.

According to the pilots, aircraft N150YD, that was slightly ahead, above and to the left of N24SR, initiated a left turn as they had decided to circle around the islands on their way to Keflavik. The pilot of N24SR initiated a small climb, accelerated and also turned to the left to follow. At this point the pilot of aircraft N24SR felt a strong wash or wake from the other aircraft, which caused aircraft N24SR to turn tighter to the left, rapidly closing the gap between the two aircraft. According to the pilot of aircraft N24SR, he reacted by breaking right, by applying the right aileron, and decreasing the power to back off. Unfortunately, aircraft N24SR continued to close in on aircraft N150YD. According to the pilot, he thought it might have occurred because he was caught in the wing vortices of aircraft N150YD. The left propeller of aircraft N24SR came into contact with the right elevator of aircraft N150YD, and both the propeller and the elevator were damaged.

Review of the aircraft tracks in the ATC systems revealed that the collision most likely occurred at 16:42:13.

After the impact, the pilot of aircraft N24SR reduced the speed to increase the distance from aircraft N150YD, observed the damage and reduced the power on his left engine as the propeller was damaged. Both pilots communicated regarding the impact and the

damage. The pilot of aircraft N24SR had his aircraft under control but was careful while using the flight controls.

The pilots cancelled their plan to circle the Vestmanneyjar islands and instead continued their flight towards Keflavik Airport.

At 16:44 ATC contacted both the pilot of aircraft N150YD and the pilot of aircraft N24SR and advised them to contact Approach on frequency 119.3. Neither pilot mentioned the inflight collision to ATC during this communication, nor any subsequent communications. According to the pilots they were focused on monitoring the flight and getting the damaged aircraft onto ground in Keflavik.

Both aircraft landed safely at Keflavik Airport. The pilot of aircraft N150YD did not utilize flaps during the landing, as he did not want to risk altering the stability configuration of the aircraft.



Both pilots held an ATP license. The pilot of aircraft N150YD had about 14,000 total flight hours experience, while the pilot of N24SR had about 13,000 total flight hours experience. They had extensive experience performing ferry flights. This was not the first time the pilots performed formation flight. The pilot of aircraft N24SR had received formal training in how to perform formation flights, while the pilot of aircraft N150YD had not.

Important safety action to pilots:

SIA-Iceland emphasizes that pilots should always advise ATC in case of in-flight collision, both for the emergency services to be put on standby and as well if any assistance is required.

SIA-Iceland closed this case with a booking on 12. September 2024.