

AIR MOBILITY COMMAND

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Investigation report details causes of fire-fighting C-130 accident

11/14/2012 - SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. – Air Mobility Command released the results of an Accident Investigation Board involving the death of four Airmen and serious injuries to two others when their Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System-equipped C-130 Hercules crashed July 1 flying in support of a fire-fighting operation in South Dakota.

The investigation determined the MAFFS C-130 cockpit crew's inadequate assessment of operational conditions resulted in the aircraft flying into a microburst and impacting the ground. The report describes a microburst as a severe, localized wind gust, blasting down from a thunderstorm, typically covering an area less than 2.5 miles in diameter and lasting less than 5 minutes.

The investigation also determined factors that substantially contributed to the mishap included the failure of the Lead Plane and Air Attack aircrews to communicate critical operational information; as well as conflicting operational guidance concerning thunderstorm avoidance.

The aircraft was assigned to and flown by members of the 145th Airlift Wing, Air National Guard, out of Charlotte, N.C. and was flying out of Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., at the time of the incident.