

FLIGHT ASSIST

April 16, 1998

Connie (CKS) 760, a freight-hauling heavy DC8 operating under an FAR part 121 certificate, was inbound to Houston Intercontinental Airport (IAH) on April 16, 1998. At approximately 1145 UTC, the pilot of CKS760 made initial contact with Houston Approach Control and advised that he had obtained current airport and landing information from the ATIS. The aircraft was operating in instrument meteorological conditions. Arrival East controller, Clinton Matheny, issued CKS760 heading instructions for radar vectors to the Runway 14L final approach course along with a descent clearance to maintain 2000 feet. The pilot properly acknowledged these instructions. The Arrival East position was approaching a high degree of complexity at the time with 14 inbound aircraft to Houston area airports from the northeast and southeast.

CKS760 subsequently began a descent and turned to the assigned heading issued by Mr. Matheny. At approximately 1152 UTC, traffic management coordinator, Karen Morgan, on duty at Bush Intercontinental Tower, was scanning the tower DBRITE and observed the data block of CKS760 approximately 15 miles north of IAH, tracking westbound. Altitude information associated with the data block indicated 800 feet, approximately 1,200 feet below the minimum vectoring altitude for the area. Immediately upon observing the low altitude (700 feet AGL), Ms. Morgan instructed the Local controller to override the Arrival East position and alert him of the indicated altitude of CKS760.

Upon receiving the urgent notification from the tower, Mr. Matheny immediately instructed CKS760 to climb to 2,000 feet. The pilot did not respond to these instructions and the data block was now indicating 600 feet (500 AGL). The pilot of CKS760 responded to a second transmission and advised Mr. Matheny that the crew was experiencing an equipment malfunction on board the aircraft. Shortly thereafter, the pilot of CKS760 requested emergency handling to Bush Intercontinental Airport.

In order to devote full attention to the immediate needs of CKS760, Mr. Matheny initiated coordination with the departure controller to assume control of the 13 other aircraft on his frequency. All of the arrivals were then switched to the Departure Control frequency and given service to their respective destinations.

Time was now available for Mr. Matheny to make a complete assessment of CKS760's needs. The DC8 had lost all of its directional and electronic navigational equipment, which

necessitated the need for a no gyro ASR approach. Without the benefit of published surveillance approach procedures for Bush Intercontinental Airport, Mr. Matheny utilized published precision approach information for Runway 14L in order to devise a procedure for the emergency operation. While all pertinent approach information was being relayed to the crew, all affected positions of operation at both the TRACON and tower were apprised of the situation and all required coordination was accomplished.

Mr. Matheny conducted the no gyro surveillance approach for CKS760 to Runway 14L resulting in the aircraft exiting the cloud bases at 500 feet lined up on the centerline of the runway. The crew reported seeing the runway approximately 2 miles from the threshold. The aircraft landed without further incident.

Bush Intercontinental Tower and TRACON are proud to nominate Karen Morgan and Clinton Matheny for the 1998 Regional Outstanding Flight Assist Award.