FLIGHT 2816: TIMELINE OF EVENTS

| Time (CST) | Event |
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| 21:23 | Flight 2816 departed IAH for MSP. |
| 21:36 | Flight 2816 was airborne with an estimated on-time arrival at MSP of 23:57. The flight departed with 22 minutes of hold fuel. This fuel is in addition to the FAA-required fuel needed to get to the alternate airport plus 45 minutes per federal regulations. |
| 23:03 | ExpressJet IAH Dispatch for flight 2816 observed weather over MSP and, as a precautionary measure, made contact with RST Station Operations to request their services as an alternate, if needed. RST acknowledged the request. Using RST as an alternate instead of MSN would give the aircraft additional fuel to circle MSP in anticipation of a break in the weather and therefore the opportunity to land safely and nearly on time at MSP. |
| 23:18 | Flight 2816 called in-range to MSP, quoted a new ETA of 23:58 and requested a gate assignment. |
| 23:40 | While conducting the arrival procedure for MSP, 2816 was placed in a holding pattern by Air Traffic Control (ATC) due to thunderstorms that had developed over the field. The crew requested an alternate airport change to either RST or Farmington, MN. Because both airports are closer to MSP than MSN, using either airport as an alternate would give the aircraft additional fuel to circle MSP in anticipation of a break in the weather and therefore an opportunity to land safely and nearly on time at MSP. |
| 23:44 | ExpressJet IAH Dispatch provided the Captain with the fuel numbers and burns for using RST as a potential alternate in order to allow for more fuel for hold time. |
| 23:47 | After confirming with ATC and the pilot in command, ExpressJet IAH Dispatch called RST Station Operations to confirm that 2816 would hold for 30 minutes in the air attempting to get into MSP. |
| 00:01 | ExpressJet IAH Dispatch called RST Station Operations to confirm availability for refueling the diverted aircraft, if needed. |
| 00:06 | ExpressJet IAH Dispatch called RST Station Operations to confirm that 2816 was diverting to RST and was 40 miles out. |
| 00:11 | After holding at MSP for the extended period as allowed for by shortening the flight time to the alternate point, the fuel quantity was at the point that a diversion to RST was required and the crew commenced navigating to RST consistent with the Captains coordination with ATC. |
| 00:28 | Flight 2816 arrived in RST. The aircraft was parked on the ramp parallel to the terminal behind an NW aircraft which was also diverted. |
| 00:30 (appx.) | RST Station Operations staff met the aircraft. The Captain opened the cabin door to discuss the situation with the agent. |

| 00:32 | The Captain called ExpressJet IAH Dispatch from the aircraft. ExpressJet IAH Dispatch advised of a one hour delay to allow for weather to move off of the MSP airport. The Captain ordered 6000 pounds of fuel for the flight to MSP. The amount of fuel loaded was based upon a calculation that considered the flying time between RST and MSP and the aircraft's maximum permissible landing weight on arrival at MSP. |
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| 00:35 | ExpressJet IAH Dispatch asked the Captain if there was any opportunity to deplane the passengers if needed. The Captain responded that in her opinion, given the location on the apron behind a Northwest (NW) aircraft where the aircraft had been instructed to park, deplaning safely would not be possible. |
| 00:40 | Continental MSP Operations was advised of flight 2816's diversion to RST and the plan to wait one hour for adverse weather to pass the MSP field. During this time, the Captain actively took steps to insure that the diverted aircraft was ready for a safe departure and arrival in MSP. In addition, the Captain maintained contact with ExpressJet IAH Dispatch via Aircraft Communications Addressing and Reporting System (ACARS). |
| 00:30-01:30 | The weather at MSP did not improve as anticipated and the aircraft remained on the RST ramp along with a diverted NW aircraft and a diverted Gulfstream. The crews of the three diverted aircraft shared information about the delay in an effort to find solutions to shorten the delay. |
| | The Captain and First Officer requested that RST Station Operations allow the aircraft to go to a gate or hardstand but were advised that the airport was closed and not able to accommodate customers. The crew questioned this response of RST Station Operations but the passengers from both commercial flights were not allowed to deplane and both crews expressed surprise. |
| | The Captain made several passenger announcements to keep customers advised of the weather and the plan to resume the flight when the weather cleared. In addition, the cabin door had remained open to augment cabin ventilation. The auxiliary power unit (APU) was also operating to provide cabin lighting and airconditioning to keep customers comfortable. The flight attendant provided all of the remaining snacks and beverages onboard along with blankets. |
| 02:00 | The Captain called ExpressJet IAH Dispatch again for a departure update. At this time the front of the weather system was dissipating, but there was still weather directly over MSP. ExpressJet IAH Dispatch warned of a line of weather between MSP and RST that would have to be circumvented. ExpressJet IAH Dispatch advised the Captain that if the weather did not move off the MSP airport, then the option of bussing the passengers would be considered. The Captain then went into the cabin and using the flight attendant handset briefed |

| 02:30 | The Captain called again for departure information. ExpressJet IAH Dispatch briefed that the MSP airport was now clear and ExpressJet IAH Dispatch recommended a departure to the north to safely circumvent the weather and cross through the line where it was dissipating. The Captain suggested waiting for a short period to avoid the possibility of having to divert back to RST due to potential weather in the region. ExpressJet IAH Dispatch and the Captain agreed to wait an additional 15-30 minutes and then reassess the en-route weather. |
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| 02:45 | ExpressJet IAH Dispatch sent a message via ACARS to 2816 explaining that the MSP airport was now clear and an opportunity to depart RST safely for MSP existed. The Captain responded via telephone that the weather was now over RST and departure could not be safely accomplished. The Captain asked that the ExpressJet IAH Hub-Coordinator from ExpressJet's SOCC to get involved to further assist in finding a way to deplane the passengers. The Captain stated that they were told by ground personnel employees that the terminal was closed and no one could go inside, including the passengers for the diverted NW flight. |
| 02:47 | The ExpressJet IAH Hub-Coordinator called Continental's MSP-Based Operations and requested that bus transportation be arranged from either RST or MSP to transport the passengers. MSP operations contacted Continental MSP GM, who began calling bus companies in search of charter busses. |
| 2:48 | The Captain re-emphasized to ExpressJet IAH Dispatch that the weather conditions would not allow a safe take-off. The Captain, at 2 hours and 20 minutes of ground time, stated that the crew would continue efforts to coordinate getting the passengers off the plane. |
| 2:55 | Continental and ExpressJet employees discussed difficulties in procuring buses. |
| 2:57 | The ExpressJet Jet IAH Hub-Coordinator talked with the Captain and suggested waiting until the employees showed up for their morning shift and then terminal access might be available for the passengers. The Captain then explained that employees were at the airport but were unwilling to allow either the ExpressJet or NW passengers into the terminal. |
| 03:04 | Because RST Station Operations continued to disallow access to the terminal, the Captain and ExpressJet IAH Dispatch agreed to attempt another departure as the weather in RST was dissipating and there would be a window of opportunity for the flight to depart to MSP safely. As the aircraft had been running its APU to maintain a comfortable cabin temperature and because the latest en-route weather could require some vectoring, the Captain requested additional fuel prior to departure. During discussions, the crew monitoring the station frequency learned that a bus had been procured for some of the NW passengers and they were being allowed to deplane into the terminal. The Captain, observing that a bus arrived, spoke directly with the ExpressJet IAH Hub-Coordinator who advised that in the absence of meeting the bus transport requirement (imposed by |

| | operations personnel) that the best option was to continue the flight to MSP. Continental MSP GM advised no buses were available at RST. |
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| 03:33 | Continental MSP Operations called ExpressJet IAH Dispatch to report weather in MSP looked good, but they could not contact RST Station Operations. |
| 03:48 | ExpressJet IAH Dispatch maintained communications with the crew and coordinated efforts to contact the fuel provider and to verify that the fuel was loaded on 2816 in order to permit a safe departure if weather permitted. |
| 03:50 | Continental MSP Operations called ExpressJet IAH Dispatch again to report that busses were currently unavailable. The crew reported that they continued to request access to the terminal and understood that ExpressJet IAH Dispatch Hub-Coordinator were also requesting terminal access, which was being denied by RST Station Operations. |
| 04:23 | RST Station Operations told ExpressJet IAH Dispatch that the flight would have to leave, the passengers would not be allowed into the Terminal and that they could do nothing for the passengers as no buses were available. |
| 04:25 | The Captain again called ExpressJet IAH Dispatch to report fuel had been loaded, but in the hour it took to get fuel the weather had once again moved over the RST airport and thus preventing a safe departure. The Captain again went to the passenger cabin to explain that bus transport could not be arranged and that the flight would proceed to MSP once the weather cleared. |
| 04:28 | The ExpressJet IAH Hub-Coordinator called Continental MSP Operations to request that bus service once again be initiated. |
| 04:31 | The Captain provided a status update that the flight was waiting for the weather to clear to take-off. |
| 04:44 | The ExpressJet IAH Hub-Coordinator told the RST Station Operations Manager to plan on the passengers entering the terminal if the plane was not airborne in 30 minutes. The RST Station Operations Manager advised that the airport was now available for passenger entry, but he first needed to coordinate with TSA as how to handle the passengers. The RST Station Operations Manager said he would look for a gate to have the aircraft park, as it was currently raining. |
| 04:58 | The ExpressJet Hub-Coordinator again called Continental MSP Operations to inquire about a bussing option. |
| 05:21 | As the weather at RST did not clear for about an hour, The Captain reported to ExpressJet IAH Dispatch that the crew was unable to take-off safely and that they would be approaching the crew critical off (CCO) time. |

| 05:44 | The ExpressJet IAH Hub-Coordinator relayed a plan to Continental MSP Operations to send an aircraft and crew from MSP to RST to operate the |
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| | continuation of flight 2816 for the diverted passengers, delivering them to their |
| | intended destination in MSP. |
| 5:56 | Flight 2816 finally marshaled from a remote parking spot to a gate position by |
| | RST station operations to a gate position. |
| 5:58 | Flight 2816 was finally allowed to park on a gate; opened the main cabin door |
| | and obtained stairs for deplaning. Passengers deplaned via stairs into the gate |
| | area because the jet bridge could not accommodate the aircraft. |
| 06:20 | The 2816 First Officer confirmed all passengers were in the terminal. |
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| 0828 | Flight 2816 departed RST for MSP |
| 0835 | Flight 2816 airborne |
| 0910 | Flight 2816 lands in MSP |
| 0915 | Flight 2816 arrives at gate in MSP |