

Structural Analysis for the American Airlines Flight 587 Accident Investigation: Global Analysis

NASA Technical Reports Server (NTRS), et al., Richard D. Young



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****** Print on Demand ******. NASA Langley Research Center (LaRC) supported the National
Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) in the American Airlines Flight 587 accident investigation due
to LaRC s expertise in high-fidelity structural analysis and testing of composite structures and
materials. A Global Analysis Team from LaRC reviewed the manufacturer s design and certification
procedures, developed finite element models and conducted structural analyses, and participated
jointly with the NTSB and Airbus in subcomponent tests conducted at Airbus in Hamburg, Germany.
The Global Analysis Team identified no significant or obvious deficiencies in the Airbus certification
and design methods. Analysis results from the LaRC team indicated that the most-likely failure
scenario was failure initiation at the right rear main attachment fitting (lug), followed by an
unstable progression of failure of all fin-to-fuselage attachments and separation of the VTP from
the aircraft. Additionally, analysis results indicated that failure initiates at the final observed
maximum fin loading condition in the accident, when the VTP was subjected to loads that were at
minimum 1.92 times the design limit load condition for certification. For certification, the VTP is
only required to support loads...



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