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No Survivors in American Airlines and Black Hawk Collision Near Washington, D.C.

An American Airlines jet carrying 60 passengers and a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter crashed into the Potomac River after a midair collision near Reagan National Airport, the first major U.S. commercial aviation disaster since 2009.

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Search and rescue efforts are underway following the tragic collision, with emergency personnel actively searching the Potomac River.

An American Airlines regional jet collided midair with a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter near Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Wednesday night, leading to notable emergency response and a search for survivors. The collision occurred around 9 p.m. ET, with both aircraft

crashing into the Potomac River.

All passengers perished, according to D.C. Fire Chief John Donnelly, speaking on Thursday during a press conference. "At this point, we don't believe there are any survivors from this accident," he said, revealing that 27 bodies were recovered from the plane, and one from the helicopter.

American Airlines Flight 5342, operated by PSA Airlines, was en route from Wichita, Kansas, to Washington, D.C., carrying 60 passengers and four crew members. The aircraft, a Bombardier CRJ700, was on its final approach to Runway 33 when it collided with the Sikorsky H-60 Black Hawk helicopter. The helicopter, on a training mission from Fort Belvoir, Virginia, had three soldiers on board.

The crash prompted an immediate halt to all takeoffs and landings at Reagan National Airport. Emergency crews from multiple agencies, including DC Fire and EMS, the Metropolitan Police Department, and the U.S. Coast Guard, have been engaged in a search and rescue operation in the dark, cold waters of the Potomac River.

American Airlines CEO Robert Isom addressed the incident. "First and most importantly I'd like to express our deep sorrow about these events." This statement was part of a video briefing where he also noted the airline's cooperation with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and other agencies for emergency response efforts.

U.S. Senator Roger Marshall of Kansas, where the flight originated, spoke at a press conference, describing the scene as one of "unbearable sorrow" and suggesting that the majority, if not all, on board might have perished.

DC Fire Chief John A. Donnelly Sr. described the rescue conditions as "extremely rough" due to high winds, low visibility, cold weather, and murky water.

The response involved about 300 first responders, with divers facing challenges due to the water temperature, which was around 37 degrees Fahrenheit, leading to a limited time frame for survival in the water. According to reports, the jet split in two, and the helicopter was found upside down, making rescue efforts even more complex.

This incident marks the first significant commercial aviation disaster in the U.S. since 2009, when Colgan Air Flight 3407 crashed. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the NTSB have launched an investigation, with the NTSB leading the effort. The FAA confirmed the specifics of the collision, noting the involvement of a PSA Airlines Bombardier CRJ700 and a Sikorsky H-60 helicopter.

President Donald Trump, briefed on the incident, issued a statement through his press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, expressing condolences and thanking first responders. Vice President J.D. Vance also called for prayers for those involved.

The incident has led to an outpouring of grief and concern, particularly from the Wichita community, where the flight originated, with local leaders and officials offering support and condolences.

This is a developing story, and updates are expected as the search and rescue operations continue and more details from the investigation emerge. The airport closure has also significantly impacted air traffic in the region, with flights being diverted or delayed.

