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16. Abstract A United Air Lines Boeing 737-222 crashed on December 8, 1972, at 1428 c.s.t. while making a nonprecision instrument approach to Runway 31L at the Chicago-Midway Airport, Chicago, Illinois. The accident occurred in a residential area approximately 1.5 miles southeast of the approach end of Runway 31L. The aircraft was destroyed by impact and subsequent fire. A number of houses and other structures in the impact area were also destroyed. There were 55 passengers and 6 crewmembers aboard the aircraft. Forty passengers and three crewmembers were killed. Two persons on the ground also received fatal injuries. The aircraft was observed below the overcast in a nose-high attitude and with the sound of high engine power just before it crashed into structures on the ground. The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of this accident was the captain's failure to exercise positive flight management during the execution of a nonprecision approach, which culminated in a critical deterioration of airspeed into the stall regime where level flight could no longer be maintained.			
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BOEING 737, N9031U  
CHICAGO-MIDWAY AIRPORT  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
DECEMBER 8, 1972

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Synopsis . . . . .	1
1. Investigation . . . . .	2
1.1 History of the Flight . . . . .	2
1.2 Injuries to Persons . . . . .	4
1.3 Damage to Aircraft . . . . .	4
1.4 Other Damage . . . . .	5
1.5 Crew Information . . . . .	5
1.6 Aircraft Information . . . . .	5
1.7 Meteorological Information . . . . .	5
1.8 Aids to Navigation . . . . .	7
1.9 Communications . . . . .	7
1.10 Aerodrome and Ground Facilities . . . . .	7
1.11 Flight Recorders . . . . .	8
1.12 Aircraft Wreckage . . . . .	9
1.13 Fire . . . . .	11
1.14 Survival Aspects . . . . .	12
1.15 Tests and Research . . . . .	14
1.15.1 Automated Radar Terminal Service Data and Derivation of Flight Profile . . . . .	14
1.15.2 General Electric Engine Sound Spectrogram Study . . . . .	16
1.15.3 B-737 Performance Study . . . . .	17
1.15.4 Simulator Tests . . . . .	19
1.15.5 B-737 Flight Tests . . . . .	20
1.15.6 Central Air Data Computer (CADC) Examination . . . . .	21
1.15.7 Description of B-737 Ice Protection and Certification. . . . .	21
1.16 United Air Lines Crew Procedures . . . . .	22
2. Analysis and Conclusions . . . . .	23
2.1 Analysis . . . . .	23
2.2 Conclusions . . . . .	31
(a) Findings . . . . .	31
(b) Probable Cause . . . . .	32
3. Recommendations . . . . .	33
 Appendices	
Appendix A - Investigation and Hearing . . . . .	35
Appendix B - Crew Information . . . . .	36
Appendix C - Aircraft Information . . . . .	38
Appendix D - Wreckage Distribution Chart . . . . .	39
Appendix E - Approach Chart . . . . .	41
Appendix F - Transcription of CVR . . . . .	42 ✓
Appendix G - Approach Profile (ARTS-III) . . . . .	55
Appendix H - Nonprecision Approach Profile . . . . .	57
Appendix I - Safety Recommendations A-73-39 thru 43 . . . . .	58

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20591

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT REPORT

Adopted: August 29, 1973

UNITED AIR LINES, INC.  
BOEING 737, N9031U  
CHICAGO-MIDWAY AIRPORT  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
DECEMBER 8, 1972

SYNOPSIS

A United Air Lines Boeing 737-222 crashed on December 8, 1972, at 1428 c.s.t. while making a nonprecision instrument approach to Runway 31L at the Chicago-Midway Airport, Chicago, Illinois. The accident occurred in a residential area approximately 1.5 miles southeast of the approach end of Runway 31L. The aircraft was destroyed by impact and subsequent fire. A number of houses and other structures in the impact area were also destroyed.

There were 55 passengers and 6 crewmembers aboard the aircraft. Forty passengers and three crewmembers were killed. Two persons on the ground also received fatal injuries.

The aircraft was observed descending below the overcast in a nose-high attitude and with the sound of high engine power just before it crashed into structures on the ground.

The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of this accident was the captain's failure to exercise positive flight management during the execution of a nonprecision approach, which culminated in a critical deterioration of airspeed into the stall regime where level flight could no longer be maintained.

As a result of this accident the Safety Board again emphasized the unique demands for crew coordination and constant vigilance during non-precision approaches. The Board also made several safety recommendations to the Federal Aviation Administration dealing with the use of flight spoilers and the occupant survival and evacuation aspects of this accident.