
Timeline for the day of the September 11 attacks

The September 11 attacks of 2001, in addition to being a unique act of aggression, constituted a media event on a scale not seen since the advent of civilian global satellite links, round-the-clock television news organizations and the instant worldwide reaction and debate made possible by the Internet. As a result, most of the events listed below were known by a large portion of the planet's population as they occurred.^[1]

Significant events

6:00 a.m.

6:00: Mohammed Atta travels Colgan Air from Portland International Jetport in Portland, Maine to Logan International Airport in Boston, Massachusetts, along with Abdulaziz al-Omari.

6:45: Atta and al-Omari arrive at Logan International Airport.

6:52: Marwan al-Shehhi calls Atta from another terminal at Logan to confirm that the plans for the attack are set.

7:00 a.m.

7:35: Atta and al-Omari board American Airlines Flight 11.

7:40: The rest of the Flight 11 hijackers board the airplane.

7:59: American Airlines Flight 11, a Boeing 767 carrying 81 passengers and 11 crew members, departs 14 minutes late from Logan International Airport in Boston, its destination being Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) in Los Angeles, California.

8:00 a.m.

8:13: Flight 11 has its last routine communication with the FAA's Boston Center.

8:14: Flight 11 is hijacked when hijackers Waleed and Wail al-Shehri rise from seats 2A and 2B and stab two flight attendants. Atta rises from seat 8D and approaches the cockpit. Within minutes, he is at the controls.

8:14: Flight 11 fails to heed air traffic controller's instruction to climb to 35,000 feet.

8:14: United Airlines Flight 175, another fully fueled Boeing 767, carrying 56 passengers and nine crew members, also departs from Logan International Airport in Boston; its destination was also Los Angeles International Airport. Five hijackers are aboard. One of them communicated with Mohammed Atta shortly before Flight 11's takeoff.

8:19: Betty Ong, a flight attendant on Flight 11 alerts American Airlines via an airphone, "The cockpit is not answering, somebody's stabbed in business class—and I think there's Mace—that we can't breathe—I don't know, I think we're getting hijacked." She then tells of the stabbings of two flight attendants.

8:20: The Federal Aviation Administration's Boston Center flight controllers decide that Flight 11 has probably been hijacked.

8:20: American Airlines Flight 77, a Boeing 757 with 58 passengers and six crew members, departs from Washington Dulles International Airport in Fairfax and Loudoun Counties, Virginia, for Los Angeles International Airport. Five hijackers are aboard.

8:21: Flight 11's transponder signal is turned off, but can still be tracked via primary radar by Boston Center. (Prior to the 9/11 Commission's report, news organizations reported this time as 8:13 or immediately thereafter.)

8:24: A radio transmission comes from Flight 11: "Eh.... We have some planes. Just stay quiet, and you'll be okay. We are returning to the airport." It is believed Atta mistakenly held a button directing his voice to radio rather than to the plane's cabin as he intended. A few seconds later, Atta's voice says, "Nobody move. Everything will be okay. If

you try to make any moves, you'll endanger yourself and the airplane. Just stay quiet." Air traffic controllers hear the transmission.

8:25: Boston Center flight controllers alert other flight control centers regarding Flight 11. NORAD is not yet alerted.

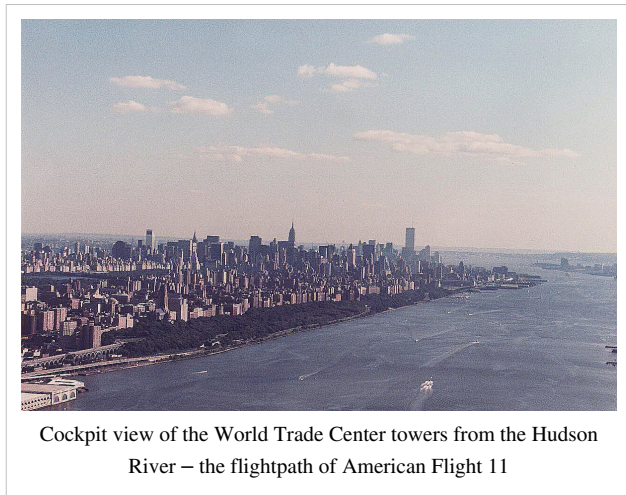
8:26:30: Flight 11 makes a 100-degree turn to the south heading toward New York City.^[2]

8:34: A third transmission from Flight 11: "Nobody move please. We are going back to the airport. Don't try to make any stupid moves."

8:34: Dan Bueno from Boston Center notifies the tower controller at Otis Air National Guard Base at Cape Cod of the hijacking of Flight 11. The controller directs Bueno to contact Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS), the northeast sector of NORAD. The controller then notifies Otis Operations Center that a call from NEADS might be coming. Two F-15 pilots begin to suit up.

8:37: Flight 175 confirms sighting of hijacked Flight 11 to flight controllers, 10 miles (16 km) to its south.

8:37:52: Boston Center control notifies NEADS of the hijacking of Flight 11, the first notification received by NORAD that Flight 11 had been hijacked. The controller requests military help to intercept the jetliner.



Cockpit view of the World Trade Center towers from the Hudson River – the flightpath of American Flight 11

8:41: The FAA's New York Center requests information about Flight 11 over the radio. Flight 175 responds: "[...]ah we heard a suspicious transmission on our departure out of Boston ah with someone ah, ah sound like someone sound like someone keyed the mike and said ah 'everyone ah stay in your seats'". New York Center acknowledges and says it will pass the information on.

8:42: United Airlines Flight 93, a Boeing 757, takes off with 37 passengers and seven crew members from Newark International Airport (now Newark Liberty International Airport), bound for San Francisco International Airport, following a 40-minute delay due

to congested runways. Four hijackers are aboard. Its flight path initially takes it close to the World Trade Center, which is 3 minutes away from being struck, before moving away westwards.

8:42—8:46 (approx.): Flight 175 is hijacked.

8:44: Flight attendant Amy Sweeney, aboard Flight 11, reports by telephone to Michael Woodward at the American Airlines Flight Services Office in Dallas, "Something is wrong. We are in a rapid descent... we are all over the place." A minute later, Woodward asks her to "describe what she sees out the window". She responds, "I see the water. I see the buildings. I see buildings..." After a short pause, she reports, "We are flying low. We are flying very, very low. We are flying way too low." Seconds later she says, "Oh my God, we are way too low." The call ends with a burst of very loud, sustained static.

8:46: Two F-15 fighter jets are ordered to scramble from Otis Air National Guard Base in Massachusetts, intended to intercept Flight 11. Because Flight 11's transponder is off, the pilots do not know the location of their target. NEADS spends the next several minutes watching their radar screens in anticipation of Flight 11 returning a radar contact.

8:46:30 Flight 11 crashes at roughly 466 mph (790 km/h or 219m/s or 425 knots) into the north face of the North Tower (1 WTC) of the World Trade Center, between floors 93 and 99. (Many early accounts gave times between 8:45 and 8:50). The aircraft enters the tower intact. It plows to the building core, severing all three gypsum-encased stairwells, dragging combustibles with it. A powerful shock wave travels down to the ground and up again. The combustibles and the remnants of the aircraft are ignited by the burning fuel. As the building lacks a

traditional full cage frame and depends almost entirely on the strength of a narrow structural core running up the center, fire at the center of the impact zone is in a position to compromise the integrity of all internal columns. People below the severed stairwells start to evacuate—no one above the impact zone is able to do so.

French filmmakers Jules and Gedeon Naudet and Czech immigrant Pavel Hlava videotape the crash of Flight 11 with their video cameras from different locations. A WNYW TV camera records the sound, but not the image, of the crash.

8:46:43: Chief of the New York City Fire Department's 1st Battalion, Joseph Pfeifer, makes the first fire department radio message advising the FDNY Manhattan Fire Dispatch Office of the crash. Chief Pfeifer and personnel from other fire companies were several blocks north, on the corner of Church Street and Lispenard Street investigating an odor of gas in the street, and witnessed the attack, along with the Naudet brothers, who were accompanying the firefighters at the time:

Battalion 1 Chief: "Battalion 1 to Manhattan."

Manhattan Dispatch: "Battalion 1, k."

Battalion 1 Chief: "We just had a plane crash into the upper floor of the World Trade Center. Transmit a 2nd Alarm and start re-located companies into the area."

Manhattan Dispatch: "10-4(Message Received), Battalion 1."

8:48—10:28: At least 100 people (some accounts say as many as 250), primarily in the North Tower, trapped by fire and smoke in the upper floors, jump to their deaths. Wikipedia:Citation needed One person at street level, firefighter Daniel Suhr, is hit by a jumper and dies. No form of airborne evacuation is attempted as smoke is too dense for a successful landing on the roof of either tower and New York City lacked helicopters equipped for horizontal rescue.

8:48:29: The first radio report of the incident is heard on WCBS-AM through traffic reporter Tom Kaminski. WCBS' traffic reports are delivered every ten minutes "on the 8s", meaning that Kaminski's traffic report was to come within two minutes of the initial impact of Flight 11 (although there is no record of how much time actually passed). At the time Kaminski was in "Chopper 880", WCBS' helicopter that he reports from for morning and evening rush hour traffic reports. The following consists of WCBS anchor Pat Carroll tossing to Kaminski in the chopper before he files his report.

Pat Carroll: WCBS news time, 8:48, it's traffic and weather together sponsored by Henry Miller's Theatre. Tom Kaminski, Chopper 880.

Tom Kaminski: Alright uh, Pat, we are just currently getting a look...at the World Trade Center, We have something that has happened here at the World Trade Center. We noticed flame and an awful lot of smoke from one of the towers of the World Trade Center. We are just coming up on this scene, this is easily three-quarters of the way up...we are...this is...whatever has occurred has just occurred, uh, within minutes and, uh, we are trying to determine exactly what that is. But currently we have a lot of smoke at the top of the towers of the World Trade Center, we will keep you posted.

8:48:50: The first television report of an incident at the World Trade Center is broadcast locally in New York by WNYW less than two minutes after the plane crashed into the North Tower. WNYW breaks into a Paramount Pictures movie trailer for *Zoolander* with the first live TV pictures of black smoke coming from the North Tower, relayed by a WNYW cameraman at ground level. One of the station's camera crews already had been out on the street that morning for New York's mayoral primary election. As WNYW broadcasts the first live pictures of smoke, the voice of reporter Dick Oliver is heard from the scene:

Jim (referring to WNYW's Jim Ryan, who was not in the studio at the time), just a few moments ago, something believed to be a plane crashed into the South Tower of the World Trade Center. I just saw flames inside, you can see the smoke coming out of the tower; we have no idea what it was. It was a tremendous boom just a few moments ago. You can hear around me emergency vehicles heading towards the scene. Now this could have been an aircraft or it could have been something internal. It appears to be something coming from the outside, due to the nature of the opening on about the 100th floor of the South Tower of the World Trade Center."

Three minutes later, Jim Ryan corrected the location of the first plane crash from the South Tower to the North Tower.

8:49:34: The first network television and radio reports of an explosion or incident at the World Trade Center. CNN breaks into a Ditech commercial at 8:49. The CNN screen subtitle first reads "WORLD TRADE CENTER DISASTER." Carol Lin, the first TV network anchor to break the news of the attacks, says:

“This just in. You are looking at obviously a very disturbing live shot there. That is the World Trade Center, and we have unconfirmed reports this morning that a plane has crashed into one of the towers of the World Trade Center. CNN Center right now is just beginning to work on this story, obviously calling our sources and trying to figure out exactly what happened, but clearly something relatively devastating happening this morning there on the south end of the island of Manhattan. That is once again, a picture of one of the towers of the World Trade Center.”

Just a minute later, Sean Murtagh, CNN vice-president of finance, in an on-air phone call, says from his office in the CNN New York bureau that a large passenger commercial jet was seen to hit the World Trade Center. Murtagh is the first network employee on the air. The first email bulletins of breaking news from CNN and MSNBC report "fire at tower of World Trade Center". Both CNN and MSNBC's websites receive such heavy traffic that many servers collapse. BBC News' website is active and shows a picture of the North Tower on fire. Minutes later, email news bulletins revise the reports of fire to a plane crash.

8:50: NEADS is notified that a plane has struck the World Trade Center as they continue to try to locate the flight on radar.

8:50: Matt Lauer, co-host of NBC News' *Today*, says: "We wanna go live right now, and show you a picture of the World Trade Center...there is a breaking story..." NBC then aired three commercials before the show returned with coverage of the first plane that hit. Programming is also interrupted on MSNBC. Wikipedia:Citation needed

8:50: ABC News was airing Good Morning America at the time of the attack. After returning from a commercial break, hosts Charles Gibson and Diane Sawyer made the announcement of the first plane that hit the North Tower.

8:50—8:54 (approx.): Flight 77 is hijacked.

8:51: A flight controller at the FAA's New York Center notices that Flight 175 had changed its transponder code twice four minutes earlier; he tries to contact the flight.

8:51:34: Another radio report, this time was WINS-AM with their anchor at the time, James Faherty said: "A plane has crashed into the World Trade Center..."

8:52: Lee Hanson receives a phone call from his son Peter, a passenger on United 175, who says "I think they've taken over the cockpit-An attendant has been stabbed- and someone else up front may have been killed. The plane is making strange moves. Call United Airlines-Tell them it's Flight 175, Boston to LA." Also on Flight 175 a flight attendant aboard calls a United Airlines office in Chicago, reporting that the flight had been hijacked, both pilots had been killed, a flight attendant had been stabbed, and the hijackers were probably flying the plane.

8:52: The F-15s at Otis Air National Guard Base are airborne. Still lacking an intercept vector to Flight 11 (and not aware that it has already crashed), they are sent to military controlled airspace off Long Island and ordered to remain in a holding pattern until between 9:09 and 9:13.

8:52: CBS interrupts The Early Show to report the news of the attack. Bryant Gumbel makes the announcement that a plane has crashed into the World Trade Center.

8:52: CNBC interrupts an episode of Squawk Box hosted by Mark Haines with a report of the unfolding attack.

8:54: Flight 77 deviates from its assigned course, turning south over Ohio.

8:55 (approx.): Announcements are made over the building-wide PA system by officials in the still-undamaged South Tower of the World Trade Center, reporting that the building is "secure" and that people should return to their offices. Some do not hear it; others ignore it and evacuate anyway; others congregate in common areas like the 78th floor sky lobby.

8:55: President George W. Bush arrives at Emma E. Booker Elementary School in Sarasota, Florida as part of a scheduled visit to promote education when White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card, who is with Bush, informs him that a small twin-engine plane has crashed into the World Trade Center. Before entering the classroom, the President

speaks to National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, who is at the White House. She first tells him it was a twin-engine aircraft—and then a commercial aircraft—that had struck the World Trade Center, adding “that’s all we know right now, Mr. President.”^[3]

8:56: Ten minutes after the North Tower of the World Trade Center was hit by Flight 11, the transponder on Flight 77 is turned off and even primary radar contact with the aircraft is lost. During radar blackout Flight 77 turns east, unnoticed by flight controllers. When primary radar information is restored at 9:05, controllers searching for Flight 77 to the west of its previous position are unable to find it.^[4] Flight 77 travels undetected for 36 minutes on a course heading due east toward Washington, D.C.

8:58: Flight 175 takes a heading toward New York City.

9:00 a.m.



9:00: Lee Hanson receives a second call from his son Peter, aboard Flight 175: "It's getting bad, Dad. A stewardess was stabbed. They seem to have knives and Mace. They said they have a bomb. It's getting very bad on the plane. Passengers are throwing up and getting sick. The plane is making jerky movements. I don't think the pilot is flying the plane. I think we are going down. I think they intend to go to Chicago or someplace and fly into a building. Don't worry, Dad. If it happens, it'll be very fast. My God, my God." The call ends abruptly, as Lee Hanson hears a woman scream.

9:01—9:02: A manager from the FAA's New York Center tells the Air Traffic Control System Command Center in Herndon, Virginia, "We have several situations going on here. It's escalating big, big time. We need to get the military involved with us. . . We're, we're involved with something else, we have other aircraft that may have a similar situation going on here."

9:01: FAA's New York Center contacts New York terminal approach control and asks for help in locating Flight 175.

9:02: Evacuation is ordered by FDNY Battalion Chief Joseph Pfeifer (North Tower). An announcement is made over the PA system to evacuate the buildings.

9:03:02: **Flight 175 crashes at about 590 mph (950 km/h, 264 m/s or 513 knots) into the south face of the South Tower (2 WTC) of the World Trade Center, between floors 77 and 85.**^[5] All 65 people on board the aircraft die instantly on impact, and unknown hundreds in the building as well. By this time, several media organizations, including the three major broadcast networks (who have interrupted their morning shows), are covering the first plane crash—millions see the impact live. Parts of the plane, including the starboard engine, leave the building from its east and north sides, falling to the ground six blocks away.

A massive evacuation begins in the South Tower below its impact zone. One of the stairwells in the South Tower remains unblocked from the top to the bottom of the tower because of the plane hitting at an offset from the vertical center line of the building, but it is filled with smoke. This leads many people to mistakenly go upwards towards the roof for a rooftop rescue that never comes. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey kept the two sets of heavy metal doors leading to the building's only roof exit tightly locked.^[6] The impact severs communication with several television and radio broadcast towers at the WTC; local station WPIX's satellite feed freezes on an image of the second impact which is all the station broadcasts until alternate transmitters are set up hours later.

Because of the North Tower's obstruction of the South Tower from certain camera angles, some are originally unaware that a second plane has struck the South Tower, and instead mistakenly believe that the second explosion has occurred in the North Tower. As instant replays of the second plane crash are shown, the anchors on the three major broadcast networks speculate on whether they are witnessing a terrorist attack or some sort of very rare accident. CNN changes its headline to read "Second plane crashes into World Trade Center." On the local station WABC-TV (which CNN was simulcasting at that moment), anchor Steve Bartelstein first assumes that the explosion seen was caused when the fuselage of the first plane exploded. As other sources and eyewitnesses correct him that it was actually a plane that had hit the South Tower, the WABC anchor then initially suggests it was a rare accident, saying that the two crashes might have been caused by navigational system failure.

Several eyewitness accounts and camera footage reveal that the plane was coming in at an angle, and was seen to turn drastically to the left to be able to hit the tower, unlike its predecessor, Flight 11, which had been able to hit the North Tower straight on. Thus, it is believed that had the plane continued flying straight, it would have at least simply clipped the side of the building with its left wing, or even missed the building entirely. (Flight 175 came in from the southwest, apparently heading for the Empire State Building, but turned right, then left into the South Tower.)^{Wikipedia:Citation needed}

9:03: President Bush enters a classroom as part of his school visit.

9:03: FAA's New York Center notifies NORAD (NEADS) of the hijacking of Flight 175, at the same time it crashes.

9:04 (approximately): The FAA's Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center stops all departures from airports in its jurisdiction (New England and eastern New York State).

9:05: After brief introductions to the Booker elementary students, President Bush is about to begin reading *The Pet Goat* with the students when Chief of Staff Andrew Card interrupts to whisper to the president, "A second plane has hit the second tower. America is under attack."^[7] The president stated later that he decided to continue the lesson rather than alarm the students.



George W. Bush being told by his Chief of Staff Andrew Card about the second plane hitting the WTC

9:06: The FAA bans takeoffs of all flights bound to or through the airspace of New York Center from airports in that Center and the three adjacent Centers — Boston, Cleveland, and Washington. This is referred to as a First Tier groundstop and covers the Northeast from North Carolina north and as far west as eastern Michigan.

9:08: The FAA bans all takeoffs nationwide for flights going to or through New York Center airspace. ABC News reports later that the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the agency that runs the New York-area airports, asked the FAA for permission to close down the New York Center airspace.

9:11: The last PATH train leaves the World Trade Center. The station was vacant when the towers collapsed.

9:13: The F-15 fighters from Otis Air National Guard Base leave military airspace near Long Island, bound for Manhattan.

9:14: President Bush returns to a holding room commandeered by the Secret Service shortly before 9:15. The holding room contains a telephone, a television showing the news coverage, and several senior staff members. The president speaks to Vice President Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, New York Governor George Pataki, and FBI Director Robert Mueller, and prepares brief remarks.^[8]

9:15: NBC News' *Today* program reports unconfirmed statements from employees at United Airlines that an American Airlines aircraft had been hijacked prior to its destruction.

9:17: The FAA closes down all New York City-area airports.^[9] The city had initially asked the FAA to close down the airports.

- 9:17:02:** CBS News correspondent Jim Stewart in Washington mentions that in the intelligence community, Osama bin Laden is a probable suspect.
- 9:18:** CNN makes reference to foul play for the first time, stating the FBI was investigating a report of plane hijacking. CNN headline: "AP: Plane was hijacked before crashes".
- 9:21:** All bridges and tunnels into Manhattan closed.
- 9:23:** Flight 93 receives warning message text from United Airlines flight dispatcher: "Beware any cockpit intrusion—Two a/c [aircraft] hit World Trade Center."
- 9:24:** The FAA notifies NORAD's Northeast Air Defense Sector about the suspected hijacking of Flight 77. The FAA and NORAD establish an open line to discuss Flight 77, and shortly thereafter Flight 93.
- 9:25:** The Otis-based F-15s establish an air patrol over Manhattan.
- 9:25:** A video teleconference begins to be set up in the White House Situation Room, led by Richard A. Clarke, a special assistant to the president, that eventually includes the CIA, the FBI, the departments of State, Justice, and Defense, and the FAA.
- 9:25:** The Associated Press informs CNN that the two plane crashes in the World Trade Center appeared to be an "act of terrorism" (terrorist attack).
- 9:26:** The FAA bans takeoffs of all civilian aircraft regardless of destination—a national groundstop. All military bases in the United States are ordered to increase threat conditions to Delta status. Wikipedia:Citation needed
- 9:28:** Hijackers storm the cockpit on Flight 93 and take over the flight. The entry of the hijackers is overheard by flight controllers at Cleveland.
- 9:29:** President Bush makes his first public statements about the attacks, in front of an audience of about 200 teachers and students at the elementary school. He states that he will be going back to Washington. *Today, we've had a national tragedy,* he starts. *Two airplanes... have crashed... into the World Trade Center... in an apparent terrorist attack on our country,* and leads a moment of silence. No one in the President's traveling party has any information during this time that other aircraft were hijacked or missing.^[10]
- 9:32:** A radio transmission from Flight 93 is overheard by flight controllers at Cleveland: "Ladies and gentlemen here... is the captain please sit down... Keep remaining [*sic*] sitting. We have a bomb on board."
- 9:32:** Controllers at the Dulles Terminal Radar Approach Control in Virginia observe "a primary radar target tracking eastbound at a high rate of speed", referring to Flight 77.
- 9:33—9:34:** Tower supervisor at Reagan National Airport tells Secret Service operations center at the White House that "an aircraft [*is*] coming at you and not talking with us," referring to Flight 77. The White House is about to be evacuated when the tower reports that Flight 77 has turned and is approaching Reagan National Airport.
- 9:34:** The FAA's Command Center relays information concerning Flight 93 to FAA headquarters.
- 9:35:** The President's motorcade departs from the elementary school, bound for Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport and Air Force One.
- 9:35:** Flight 93 reverses direction over Ohio and starts flying eastwards.
- 9:35:** Based on a report that Flight 77 had turned again and was circling back toward the District of Columbia, the Secret Service orders the immediate evacuation of the Vice President from the White House.
- 9:36:** Cleveland advises the FAA Command Center that it is still tracking Flight 93 and inquires whether someone had requested the military to launch fighter aircraft to intercept the aircraft.
- 9:37:** Vice President Cheney enters an underground tunnel leading to a security bunker.
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A Lincoln Town Car taxicab was hit by a lightpole as American Airlines Flight 77 passed over Washington Boulevard and crashed into the Pentagon.

9:37:46: Flight 77 crashes into the western side of the Pentagon at 530 mph (853 km/h, 237 m/s, or 460 knots) and starts a violent fire. The section of the Pentagon hit consists mainly of newly renovated, unoccupied offices. All 64 people on board are killed, as are 125 Pentagon personnel.

9:39: Another radio transmission is heard from Ziad Jarrah aboard Flight 93: "Uh, this is the captain. I would like you all to remain seated. We have a bomb on board and are going back to the airport, and to have our demands, so please remain quiet."

9:39: Fox News Channel reports, "We -- we are hearing -- right now that another explosion that -- has taken place. At the Pentagon."

9:39: NBC and MSNBC report an explosion at the Pentagon.

9:40: Video teleconference in White House Situation Room begins with the physical security of the President, the White House, and federal agencies. They are not yet aware of the Pentagon crash.

9:40:49: CNN's Breaking News bulletin reads "Reports of fire at Pentagon."

9:42: Ben Sliney of the FAA issues the execution order for SCATANA grounding all air traffic over the United States and diverting any incoming international traffic to alternate destinations.

9:43: Abu Dhabi TV reports it received a call from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, claiming responsibility for the World Trade Center attack, but this is soon denied by a senior officer of the group.

9:43: The White House and the Capitol are evacuated and closed.

9:45: United States airspace is shut down. No civilian aircraft are allowed to take off, and all aircraft in flight are ordered to land at the nearest airport as soon as possible. Nearly all international flights headed for the U.S. are redirected to Canada, while some flights from South America were diverted to Mexico. Transport Canada, Canada's transportation agency, also closes down its airspace, but the Mexican airspace did not shut down. The FAA announces that civilian flights are suspended until at least noon September 12, while Transport Canada gives similar orders; the FAA further ordered that diverted U.S.-bound international flights should be taken in, launching the agency's "Operation Yellow Ribbon". The groundings would eventually last until September 14. Military and medical flights as well as Con Air flights continue. This is the fourth time all commercial flights in the U.S. have been stopped, and the first time a suspension was unplanned. All previous suspensions were military-related (Sky Shield I-III), from 1960 to 1962. Many newspapers (including *The New York Times*) mistakenly print that this is the first time flights have been suspended. This was also the first time commercial flights in Canada have been stopped.

Further information: Operation Yellow Ribbon

9:45: CNN receives initial reports that, in addition to a fire at the Pentagon, there is also a fire at the National Mall. These reports on the National Mall, however, are later proven to be false.

9:49: The FAA Command Center at Herndon suggests that someone at FAA headquarters should decide whether to request military assistance with Flight 93. Ultimately, the FAA makes no request before it crashes.

9:50 (approximately): The Associated Press reports that Flight 11 was apparently hijacked after departure from Boston's Logan Airport. Within an hour this is confirmed for both Flight 11 and Flight 175.

9:51: FDNY Battalion Chief Orio Palmer reaches the 78th Floor Sky Lobby of the South Tower along with Fire Marshal Ronald Bucca. Palmer reports that there are two pockets of fire and numerous dead bodies. Wikipedia:Citation needed

9:52: The National Security Agency intercepts a phone call between a known associate of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan and someone in the Republic of Georgia, announcing that he had heard "good news", and that another target was still to be hit.^[11]

9:53: CNN confirms a plane crash at the Pentagon.

9:55: A CNN correspondent mentions Osama bin Laden as someone determined to strike the US.

9:55: Air Force One leaves Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport.

9:57: Passenger revolt begins on Flight 93.

9:57: President Bush leaves Sarasota, Florida, on Air Force One. The plane reaches cruising altitude and circles for approximately 40 minutes while the destination of the plane is discussed.

9:58:59: The South Tower of the World Trade Center collapses, 56 minutes after the impact of Flight 175. Its destruction is viewed and heard by a vast television and radio audience. As the roar of the collapse goes silent, tremendous gray-white clouds of pulverized concrete and gypsum rush through the streets. Most observers think a new explosion or impact has produced smoke and debris that now obscures the South Tower, but once the wind clears the smoke it becomes clear that the building is no longer there. On ABC News' *Good Morning America*, correspondent Don Dahler, who was home at the time of the incident and lived near the site, reports to anchor Peter Jennings on air that he has witnessed the tower collapse; this is perhaps the first official word of the collapse as Dahler's report is filed seconds after the building collapsed.

Further information: Collapse of the World Trade Center

10:00 a.m.

10:00: Moments after the South Tower fell, FDNY Battalion Chief Joseph Pfeifer (inside of North Tower) said on the radio the order to all firemen, at least twice, "Evacuate the building". Due to many communication limitations, numerous firefighters within the tower did not receive this transmission. ^[12]

10:01: The FAA Command Center advises FAA headquarters that an aircraft had seen Flight 93 "waving his wings," the hijackers' efforts to defeat the passengers' counterattack.

10:02: Communicators with the Vice President in the security bunker begin receiving reports from the Secret Service of an inbound aircraft — presumably hijacked — heading toward Washington. This is Flight 93.

10:02: CNN announces that the Sears Tower in Chicago has been evacuated.

10:03 (approximately): The National Military Command Center learns from the White House of Flight 93's hijacking.

10:03:11: United Airlines Flight 93 is crashed by its hijackers and passengers at 583 mph (926 km/h, 272 m/s, or 509 knots), due to fighting in the cockpit 80 miles (129 km) southeast of Pittsburgh in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. ^[13] Later reports indicate that passengers had learned about the World Trade Center and Pentagon crashes on cell phones and at least three were planning on resisting the hijackers; the resistance was confirmed by Flight 93's cockpit voice recording, on which the hijackers are heard making their decision to down the plane before the passengers succeed in breaching the cockpit door. The 9/11 Commission believed that Flight 93's target was either the United States Capitol building or the White House in Washington, D.C.

10:05: Andrea Mitchell, reporting on NBC from outside the Pentagon, reports that Osama bin Laden may have been involved in the attacks.

10:05: CNN's headlines read: "SOUTH TOWER AT WTC COLLAPSES."

10:05: The IDS Center in Minneapolis is evacuated.

10:07: NBC reports for the first time that the South Tower of the World Trade Center has collapsed. Prior to this time they have said only that a section of the building has fallen away.

10:07: NEADS, controlling the only set of fighters over Washington, first learns of the hijacking of Flight 93, 4 minutes after it actually crashed. ABC News reported at the time, the anchor Peter Jennings, said at the time: "The Southern Tower has just collapsed..."

10:08: Air Traffic Control System Command Center in Herndon reports to FAA headquarters that Flight 93 may be down near Johnstown, Pennsylvania; at 10:17 the Command Center concludes it is so.

10:10: Part of the west side of the Pentagon collapses.

10:10: NEADS emphatically tells fighter pilots over Washington, "Negative clearance to shoot."

10:10—10:15 (approximately): Vice President Cheney, unaware that Flight 93 has crashed, authorizes fighter aircraft to engage the inbound plane, reported to be 80 miles (129 km) from Washington, based not on radar (from which it has disappeared) but speed and trajectory projections.

10:13: Thousands are involved in an evacuation of the United Nations complex in New York.

10:13—10:22: The 9/11 Commission's estimated arrival of Flight 93 over Washington had it not crashed in Pennsylvania.^[14]

10:14—10:19: A lieutenant colonel at the White House repeatedly relays to the NMCC that the Vice President has confirmed that fighters are cleared to engage inbound aircraft if they can verify that the aircraft was hijacked.

10:18: NBC reports that Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has denied complicity in the attacks and is appalled by them.

10:20: President Bush, aboard Air Force One, tells Vice President Cheney that he has authorized a shutdown of aircraft if necessary.^[15]

10:23: The Associated Press reports a car bomb has exploded outside the State Department in Washington, D.C. This and several other reports of terrorist acts in the capital are quickly found to be false.^[16]

10:24: Two men who were being evacuated through the underground shopping mall below the South Tower when it collapsed on them are able to climb up through thirty feet of debris to safety.

10:28:22: The North Tower of the World Trade Center collapses. Due to the destruction of the gypsum-encased stairwells on the impact floors (most skyscraper stairwells are encased in reinforced concrete), no one who was above the impact zone in the North Tower escapes the collapse. The Marriott Hotel, located at the base of the two towers, is also destroyed. The second collapse is also viewed live on television and heard on radio. The North Tower collapses 1 hour, 42 minutes after the impact of Flight 11, meaning the building had burned during the whole duration of the attacks. 7 World Trade Center was burning after the collapse of the North Tower. Over on NBC News, Katie Couric says: "The South Tower of the World Trade Center has just collapsed..."

Several long-distance videos of the collapse, such as CNN, were able to notice that, after the cloud of dust had partially cleared away, a portion of the building was still standing. It appeared to be the lower half of the northwest corner column of the North Tower, which, like a spire, grew larger and had more structure still standing near the bottom. The portion rose to a fairly good height considering the collapse around it, as it appeared to rise nearly forty stories off the ground. This piece remained standing for a few seconds after the initial collapse before it also came down.

10:31: NORAD first communicates the Vice President's shutdown authority to NEADS.

10:35: Air Force One, carrying the president, turns for Barksdale Air Force Base in Bossier City, Louisiana.

10:37: Associated Press reports that officials at the Somerset County airport confirm that a large plane has crashed in western Pennsylvania. CNN's Aaron Brown passes along reports that a 747 is "down" in Pennsylvania. He stresses these reports are unconfirmed. He also, in the confusion, reports another plane heading for the Pentagon.

10:37: The Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota, is evacuated and closed.

10:39: Another hijacked jumbo jet is claimed to be headed for Washington, D.C. F-15s are scrambled and patrol the airspace above Washington, D.C. while other fighter jets sweep the airspace above New York City. They have orders, first issued by Vice President Cheney and later confirmed by President Bush, to shoot down any potentially dangerous planes that do not comply with orders given to them via radio. Eventually, the aircraft is revealed to be a medevac helicopter on its way to the Pentagon.

10:41: NBC News confirms that a plane has "gone down" in Somerset County. The earlier unconfirmed statements about an incident at the State Department in Washington, D.C. are reported as false.

10:43: CNN reports that a mass evacuation of Washington, D.C. and New York has been started. A few minutes later, New York mayor Rudy Giuliani orders an evacuation of Lower Manhattan.

10:49: Fox News Channel is the first of the United States news networks to implement a news ticker at the bottom of its screen for supplementary information about the attacks. CNN adds one at 11:11, and MSNBC adds one at approximately 2:00 pm. All three cable networks have used a news ticker continuously in the years since (and many local television stations have followed suit).

10:50:19: Five stories of part of the Pentagon collapse due to the fire.

10:53: New York's primary elections are canceled.

10:53: Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld orders the U.S. military placed at DEFCON 3, for the first time since the Yom Kippur War in 1973.

11:00 a.m.

11:00: Transport Canada halts all aircraft departures until further notice, except for police, military, and humanitarian flights, as part of Operation Yellow Ribbon. The operation was well underway as international flights headed for the U.S. had already started to land at Canadian airports, beginning at CFB Goose Bay. Fourteen other airports follow, including Halifax, Lester B. Pearson in Toronto, Montréal-Dorval, and Vancouver.

11:05: The FAA confirms that several planes have been hijacked in addition to American Airlines Flight 11.

11:16: American Airlines confirms the loss of its two aircraft.

11:26: United Airlines confirms the loss of Flight 93 and states that it is "deeply concerned" about Flight 175.^[17]

11:53: United Airlines confirms the loss of its two aircraft.

11:55: The border between the U.S. and Mexico is on highest alert, but is not closed.

12:00 p.m.

12:01 (approximately): Fourteen people, including twelve firefighters, who were in a section of a stairwell in the North Tower that held together during the collapse, climb the stairs to the top of the Ground Zero rubble field.

12:04: Los Angeles International Airport, the intended destination of Flights 11, 77 and 175, is shut down.

12:15: San Francisco International Airport, the intended destination of Flight 93, is shut down.

12:15 (approximately): The airspace over the 48 contiguous United States is clear of all commercial and private flights.

12:30 (approximately): Secretary of State Colin Powell boards a plane in Lima, Peru, for Washington, D.C.

12:39: On CNN, Senator John McCain characterizes attack as an "act of war."

12:41: Senator Orrin Hatch tells CNN, "Both the FBI and our intelligence community believe that this is Bin Laden's signature."

1:00 p.m.

1:00 (approximately): At the Pentagon, fire crews are still fighting fires. The early response to the attack had been coordinated from the National Military Command Center, but that had to be evacuated when it began to fill with smoke.

1:04: President Bush puts the U.S. military on high alert worldwide (known as *Force Protection Condition Delta*). Taped remarks from the President were aired from Barksdale Air Force Base, stating that "freedom itself was attacked this morning by a faceless coward and freedom will be defended." He also said that the "United States will hunt down and punish those responsible for these cowardly acts." He then leaves for a U.S. Strategic Command bunker located at Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue, Nebraska.

1:27: Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, D.C., declares a state of emergency; the District of Columbia National Guard arrives on site.

2:00 p.m.

2:39: At a press conference New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani is asked to estimate the number of casualties at the World Trade Center. He replies, "More than any of us can bear."

2:50: President Bush arrives at Offutt Air Force Base, Bellevue, Nebraska to convene a National Security Council teleconference via the U.S. STRATCOM bunker.

3:00 p.m.

3:00 (approx.): Pasquale Buzzelli, who lost consciousness in a North Tower stairway during the collapse, awakens to find himself lying atop the debris with only a fractured foot.

4:00 p.m.

4:00: National news outlets report that high officials in the federal intelligence community are stating that Osama bin Laden is suspect number one.

4:25: The New York Stock Exchange, NASDAQ, and the American Stock Exchange report that they will remain closed Wednesday, September 12.

4:36: President Bush departs Offutt Air Force Base on Air Force One.

5:00 p.m.

5:20:27: The penthouse on top of 7 World Trade Center crumbles apart, only about 6 seconds before the entire building would begin to collapse.

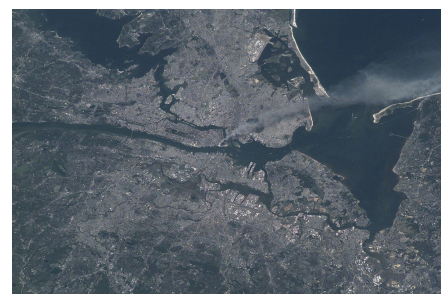
5:20:33: 7 World Trade Center, a 47-story building, collapses. The building contained New York's emergency operations center, operated by the NYC Office of Emergency Management, originally intended to respond to disasters such as the September 11 terrorist attacks. Due to the emergency personnel having more than enough time to evacuate the building since the collapse of the North Tower, there are no injuries or deaths as a result of the collapse.

6:00 p.m.

6:00: Explosions and tracer fire are reported in Kabul, Afghanistan, by CNN and the BBC. The Northern Alliance, involved in a civil war with the Taliban government, is later reported to have attacked Kabul's airport with helicopter gunships.

6:00: The last of the aircraft headed for the U.S. lands in Canada at Vancouver International Airport, since it was flying over the Pacific.

6:54: President Bush arrives at the White House.



Smoke plume emanating from the World Trade Center as seen from the ISS (4:00 p.m. EST)

7:00 p.m.

7:00: Efforts to locate survivors in the rubble that had been the twin towers continue. Fleets of ambulances are lined up to transport the injured to nearby hospitals, but they stand empty. "Ground Zero", as the site of the WTC collapse becomes known henceforth, is the exclusive domain of New York City's Fire Department and Police Department, despite volunteer steel and construction workers who stand ready to move large quantities of debris quickly. Relatives and friends of victims or likely victims, many displaying enlarged photographs of the missing printed on home computer printers, have appeared around New York. The New York Armory at Lexington Avenue and 26th Street and Union Square Park at 14th Street and Broadway become centers of vigil.

7:24: Members of Congress join on the steps of the United States Capitol and sing "God Bless America".

7:30: The U.S. government denies any responsibility for the reported explosions in Kabul, capital of Afghanistan.

8:00 p.m.

8:00 (approx.): Port Authority Police Officer Will Jimeno, who was in an underground corridor between the two towers, is found alive in the rubble, and eventually freed at approximately 11:00 p.m.

8:30: President Bush addresses the nation from the White House.^[18] Among his statements: "Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts," "Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shatter steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve," and "The search is underway for those who are behind these evil acts...we will make *no* distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them."

As Bush speaks, members of Congress tell CNN that during private briefings with senior administration officials, they were told that the administration had enough evidence that it was "confident" the attacks are the work of Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda terrorist network.

9:00 p.m.

9:00: President Bush meets his full National Security Council, followed roughly half an hour later by a meeting with a smaller group of key advisers. Bush and his advisers have evidence that Osama bin Laden is behind the attacks. CIA Director Tenet says that al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan are essentially one and the same. Bush says, "Tell the Taliban we're finished with them."

10:00 p.m.

10:00: There are reports (later proven incorrect) of many survivors buried in rubble in New York making cell phone calls. Only two more survivors will be pulled from the rubble on September 12 and neither of them had made cell phone calls.

11:00 p.m.

11:00: After 13 hours, the NYPD, FDNY and PAPD finally dig out Will Jimeno. They learn that Port Authority police sergeant John McLoughlin is also trapped. The NYPD, FDNY and PAPD dig him out at 8:00 am the next morning after he has been there for almost a day.

11:30: Before sleeping, President Bush enters into his journal: "The Pearl Harbor of the 21st century took place today...We think it's Osama bin Laden."

Notes

- [1] All times given are in Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), or UTC−04:00.
- [2] NTSB Report (http://www3.nts.gov/info/Flight_Path_Study_AA11.pdf), page. 3
- [3] 9/11 Commission Report (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/911/pdf/fullreport.pdf>), p. 35.
- [4] With its transponder off, it is possible, though more difficult, to track an aircraft by its primary radar returns. But unlike transponder data, primary radar returns do not show the aircraft's identity and altitude.
- [5] Time as given in the 9/11 Commission Report (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/911/index.html>), July 2004, pp. 8, 32. However, *Final Report of the Collapse of the World Trade Center Towers* (<http://wtc.nist.gov/NISTNCSTAR1CollapseofTowers.pdf>), published by the U.S. Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology in September 2005, pp. 83-84, timed this event at 9:02:59 a.m., established from time stamps in four September 11 telecasts.
- [6] Paltrow, Scott J., Kim, Queens Sook, Wall St. Journal, Could Helicopters Have Saved People From the Top of the Trade Center? http://www.fpp.co.uk/online/01/10/WTC_Helicopters.html, retrieved August 10, 2010
- [7] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, "We Have Some Planes," (http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report_Ch1.htm) 1.3 National Crisis Management, The President and the Vice President.
- [8] http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/images/20010911-16_p7058-20a-515h.html
- [9] Timeline: Sept. 11, 2001 (<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,62184,00.html>), *FoxNews.com*
- [10] 9/11 Commission Report (http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report_Ch1.htm), Sec. 1.3, National Crisis Management.
- [11] Andrew Cockburn, "Rumsfeld" (<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/25/books/chapters/0325-1st-cockb.html>), *New York Times*, March 25, 2007.
- [12] Executive Summary (http://www.nyc.gov/html/fdny/pdf/mck_report/executive_summary.pdf), p. 7-8
- [13] The exact time is subject to some dispute — a report on seismographic data readings (<http://www.mgs.md.gov/esic/publications/download/911pentagon.pdf>) by Won-Young Kim and Gerald R. Baum puts the time of impact at 10:06:05. The 9/11 Commission argued "the seismic data on which [Kim and Baum based their] estimate are far too weak in signal-to-noise ratio and far too speculative in terms of signal source to be used as a means of contradicting the impact time [of 10:03] established by the very accurate combination of FDR, CVR, ATC, radar, and impact site data sets (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, Notes (http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report_Notes.htm), 1 "We Have Some Planes", note #168). Black box recordings, radar analysis, satellite data (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, "We Have Some Planes," (http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report_Ch1.htm) 1.2 Improvising a Homeland Defense, United Airlines Flight 93) and at least one telephone call indicate 10:03:11.
- [14] The 9/11 Commission Report, p. 44–45.
- [15] The 9/11 Commission Report, p. 41.
- [16] A stunning 48 hours of news (<http://www.ap.org/log/APNewsAlertsandFlashes.pdf>), Associated Press. ABC News: "Post-Attack Tremors" (http://web.archive.org/web/20020916203833/http://abcnews.go.com/onair/DailyNews/sept11_moments_4.html), Sept. 16, 2002.
- [17] CNN, September 11: Chronology of terror (<http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/11/chronology.attack/>).
- [18] Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation (<http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html>), Sept. 11, 2001.

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Further reading

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- Thompson, Paul (2004). *The Terror Timeline: Year by Year, Day by Day, Minute by Minute: A Comprehensive Chronicle of the Road to 9/11*. HarperCollins. ISBN 0-06-078338-9.

External links



Wikiversity has learning materials about *Timeline for the day of the September 11 attacks*

- "Interactive 911 Timeline" (<http://www.timerime.com/timeline/17434>) - Provided by *TimeRime.com*.
- "Complete 911 Timeline" minute by minute (http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_911_timeline&startpos=2900) - Provided by the *History Commons*.

- Washington Post, 27 January 2002 (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A42754-2002Jan26>) Details of discussions that took place between President Bush and his advisors on the night of September 11.
 - September 11: Chronology of terror (<http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/11/chronology.attack/>): CNN timeline published September 12.
 - 911 Case Study: Pentagon Flight 77 (<http://www.mikejwilson.com/911/>): 3d Computer Simulation about The Pentagon impact.
 - My 9/11 Flight (<http://www.ab9il.net/aviation/my-flight-9-11.html>): Airline pilot's account of the SCATANA airspace shutdown on 9/11.
 - Video Archive of News Stations - Archive.org (http://www.archive.org/details/sept_11_tv_archive)
 - (<http://www.911survivor.com>) More information on Pasquale Buzzelli, the "9/11 Surfer" who survived the North Tower collapse.
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