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Delta Flight Diverted After Severe Turbulence Injures 25 Passengers

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Twenty-five passengers were taken to the hospital after a Delta Air Lines flight experienced severe turbulence mid-air, forcing the plane to divert and make an emergency landing in Minneapolis.

The flight, originally scheduled to travel from Salt Lake City, Utah, to Amsterdam, Netherlands, encountered “significant turbulence” while cruising at 37,000 feet over South Dakota. The aircraft was two hours into its planned nine-hour journey when the incident occurred, prompting the crew to reroute to Minneapolis–Saint Paul International Airport for safety reasons.

Emergency medical personnel met the aircraft upon arrival to assess and treat both passengers and crew members. Delta Air Lines released a statement expressing gratitude to responders and reaffirming its commitment to passenger safety: “We are grateful for the support of all emergency responders involved. Safety is our No. 1 value at Delta, and our Delta Care Team is working directly with customers to support their immediate needs.”

Turbulence-related incidents have become more frequent in recent years. A 2023 study by the *American Geophysical Union* (AGU) found that global turbulence has increased by 55 per cent compared to levels recorded 40 years ago. The report specifically highlighted the growing prevalence of clean-air turbulence — a dangerous type of turbulence that occurs without visible weather cues — attributing the trend in part to climate change.

Meteorologist Mark Prosser from the University of Reading commented on the growing operational challenges for the airline industry, stating: “Airlines will need to start thinking about how they will manage the increased turbulence as it costs the industry \$150 to \$500 million annually in the United States alone.”

This incident follows several recent cases involving turbulence-related injuries. In June, a Ryanair flight from Berlin to Milan was hit by violent turbulence caused by thunderstorms, injuring nine passengers and reportedly throwing several travellers into the cabin ceiling. Late last year, a Lufthansa aircraft flying over the Atlantic also encountered turbulence,

injuring 11 individuals onboard.

In all cases, emergency services were dispatched to meet the affected aircraft upon landing, ensuring immediate medical care for the injured.

The rise in turbulence-related incidents is a growing concern for global aviation, reinforcing the need for improved forecasting tools, crew preparedness, and passenger awareness.