



A cargo airplane operated by Air Atlanta Icelandic, similar to the one in the image on the left, was forced to land prematurely on Nov. 9. A horse (not the one pictured here) on board got loose from its stall. (Image credit: Air Atlanta Icelandic/Facebook, George Widman/The Associated Press)

Cargo jet forced to turn back after horse escapes stall

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Pilot had to dump almost 20,000 kilograms of fuel to land safely

We're not horsing around. This really did happen.

On Nov. 9, a cargo jet headed from New York to Belgium had to turn back after a horse got loose from its stall in the lower deck, according to air traffic control audio.

There were no passengers on the plane.

The pilot of the Boeing 747, operated by Air Atlanta Icelandic, reached out to air traffic control in Boston, Massachusetts, for help.

It happened shortly after takeoff.

“We don’t have a problem flying-wise but we need to return, return back to New York,” the pilot said.

“We cannot get the horse back secured.”

A website that provides live broadcasts from air traffic control towers published the recordings.

The plane was allowed to return to John F. Kennedy Airport in New York City.

However, the pilot said that he needed to dump roughly 20,000 kilograms of fuel in order to land safely.

That’s because the weight limit for taking off is much higher than the weight limit to safely land a plane.

The controller gave the OK and alerted nearby pilots about a “fuel dumping in progress approximately 10 miles [16 kilometres] west of Martha’s Vineyard.”

The pilot also asked for a veterinarian for the horse upon landing.

According to the tracking site FlightRadar24, the flight landed safely at John F. Kennedy airport shortly after, and then took off again and arrived at Liege Airport in Belgium the following morning.