

Rise in fatal plane crashes but fewer are killed

By [Peter Woodman](#)

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The number of commercial plane crashes resulting in deaths last year has risen, it was revealed today.

But the number of people killed in these fatal accidents has dipped 25pc compared with 2007, figures from aerospace information and consultancy company, Ascend, showed.

There were 28 fatal accidents involving airline jets and turbo-prop planes last year, compared with 24 in 2007.

But the fatal accident rate for 2008, of one death per 1.3m flights, was less than the overall rate for the nine years since 2000, of one per 1.2m flights, because of an increase in the number of flights being made.

Deaths of passengers and crew in 2008 accidents totalled 539, compared with 730 in 2007, and was the lowest-ever total, except for 2004 when there were 434 fatalities.

Worst

The worst accident of 2008 was the Spanair MD-80 crash in August, which killed 149 of the 166 passengers on board and five of the six crew.

Only two other accidents killed more than 50 people.

Last year compared well with the 1990s, which recorded an average of 37.4 fatal accidents a year, and an average of 1,128 people died each year -- more than twice that in 2008.

Ascend director Paul Hayes said: "Although there were more fatal accidents this year than last, far fewer people died. The chances of dying in a serious air accident have reduced significantly and, overall, passenger safety has improved."

- *Peter Woodman*



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