

Boeing 737-230, EI-CNT

AAIB Bulletin No: 6/2003	Ref: EW/G2002/12/14	Category: 1.1
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Boeing 737-230, EI-CNT	
No & Type of Engines:	2 Pratt & Whitney PW JT8D-15 turbofan engines	
Year of Manufacture:	1980	
Date & Time (UTC):	31 December 2002 at 1020 hrs	
Location:	London Stansted Airport	
Type of Flight:	Public Transport	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 5	Passengers - 127
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - 1 (Minor)
Nature of Damage:	None to aircraft	
Commander's Licence:	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	43 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	8,900 hours (of which 5,400 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 130 hours	
	Last 28 days - 85 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and telephone inquiries by the AAIB	

The aircraft had just arrived at London Stansted Airport after a flight from Londonderry and was parked at Stand C50.

The passengers were to be disembarked using a conventional set of mobile steps at the aft left-hand door. The steps were, as usual, pushed up to the aft fuselage, with the rubber strip against the aircraft skin a few inches below the door sill. A young woman, one of the first passengers to disembark, stepped from the cabin onto the top step and, as her foot slipped, she collapsed with a badly dislocated knee. The ground handling party immediately contacted the airport and external emergency services. The passenger was not moved until the medical staff arrived and she was taken to Harlow Hospital.

The handling company immediately took the mobile steps out of service for an inspection. The report from this inspection stated that the steps were in proper working order, that the treads, which are made of metal with a raised grid, were clear of grease and that they were dry at the time of the accident. The report added that, at the time of the accident, the steps had the parking brake applied, the stabilisers deployed and the safety guard rails in place. An officer from the Airport Police, who attended the accident, confirmed that the steps had been properly placed next to the aircraft with the first tread at a reasonable height (4 to 6 inches) below the door sill. The Police officer did state, however, that the conditions were cold, wet and windy and that he had found the treads slippery. The flight crew reported the actual weather conditions at the time of the accident as a north-easterly wind at 5 to 10 kt, scattered cloud at 4,500 feet, no significant weather and an air temperature of 1°C.

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The young woman who suffered the injury recalled being one of the first passengers off the aircraft and that, as she put her left foot out of the aircraft, it slipped on the first tread of the steps and her knee dislocated as she fell. She further reported this dislocation injury had occurred to the same knee a number of times before. She did comment, however, that it would have been helpful for the aircraft crew to have made some sort of announcement before disembarkation concerning the state of the steps.

The UK CAA does not keep detailed reports of this sort of incident on the ground. The AAIB discussed the topic of safety on mobile steps with a major UK airline who have an extensive programme both for air safety and ground safety. This airline found three reported instances of passengers or staff slipping on mobile aircraft steps over a recent 12 month period. These statistics do not appear to show slipping on mobile aircraft steps to be a significant hazard.