

Boeing 777-222, N768UA

AAIB Bulletin No:	10/99	Ref:	EW/G99/05/08	Category:	1.1
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Boeing 777-222, N768UA				
No & Type of Engines:	2 Pratt & Whitney PW4077 turbofan engines				
Year of Manufacture:	1995				
Date & Time (UTC):	7 May 1999 at 1200 hrs				
Location:	London Heathrow Airport				
Type of Flight:	Public Transport				
Persons on Board:	Crew - 8 - Passengers - 147				
Injuries:	Crew - None - Passengers - None				
Nature of Damage:	Wheel change required				
Commander's Licence:	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence				
Commander's Age:	57 years				
Commander's Flying Experience:	6,176 hours (of which 427 were on type)				
	Last 90 days - 100 hours				
	Last 28 days - 36 hours				
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot				
	And further enquiries of the operator				

The aircraft was parked on Stand J15, at the outer end of a pier, adjacent to the inner taxiway. The slope in that area is approximately 0.6%. It had been raining most of the day and the pavement surface was wet, although at the time of the incident the rain had stopped. During the pushback, clearance was given to start engines. An incoming aircraft was holding for stand J15, and it became necessary to tow the aircraft forward to allow enough room for the incoming aircraft to pass. As the driver began to straighten the tug and tow the aircraft forward, he felt the tug being pushed forward and began to pick up speed, even though his foot was off the accelerator. The aircraft thrust caused the tug to skid and sheared the head off the towbar. The driver asked the flight crew to 'set brakes and cut engines', but there was no response because the communication cable had become disconnected.

As the aircraft continued forward the driver jumped out of the tug and he, along with the two wingwalkers, signalled for the flight crew to set brakes. The aircraft passed over the tug with the starboard wheels of the main gear coming to rest against the side of the tug.

As a result of this event, the operator is planning to publicise this incident in company safety and training publications and utilise the event in tug driver training to emphasise both the need for early

detection of impending loss of control and the appropriate actions to take should loss of control occur. In addition they are revising their maintenance manual to prohibit towing the Boeing 777 with both engines running, and modifying their pushback procedure to delay the B777 engine start until the brakes are set.