Aircraft Type and Registration:	Boeing 747-4Q8, G-VTOP
No & Type of Engines:	4 General Electric CF6-80C2B1F turbofan engines
Year of Manufacture:	1997
Date & Time (UTC):	16 November 2004 at 0915 hrs
Location:	Stand 327, London Heathrow Airport
Type of Flight:	Public Transport (Passenger)
Persons on Board:	Crew - 19 Passengers - 179
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Dent near cargo loading door, cracked frame
Commander's Licence:	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	53 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	15,200 hours (of which 10,100 were on type) Last 90 days - 168 hours Last 28 days - 44 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form and accident report submitted by the airline

Loading of the rear cargo hold prior to flight had been completed. The operator of the high lift loader lowered the platform to enable him to raise the door locks. He then raised the platform again, to level with the hold door sill, and entered the hold to check the stops and locks were all in the correct positions. When in the hold he heard a crushing noise behind him. He returned to the doorway to find that the platform had risen upwards and damaged the cargo door frame and an adjacent cargo bin. He shouted for help and attracted the attention of a colleague who activated the emergency stop button of the high loader.

An investigation into the accident carried out by the airline determined that when the high loader operator had released the control switch used to raise the platform it did not return to neutral as it was designed to do, but remained latched in the 'up' position. The platform had probably continued to rise at a slower than normal operating speed, such that the operator had not noticed it was still going up when he stepped into the hold. Since the accident all the high loader vehicles operated by the ground handling company have been modified to incorporate an override switch which must be engaged before the platform lift function can be activated.