

Aircraft Type and Registration: McDonnell Douglas DC-9-32, G-PKBM

No & Type of Engines: 2 Pratt & Whitney JT8D-9A turbofan engines

Year of Manufacture: 1974

Date & Time (UTC): 16 April 1995 at 0920 hrs

Location: Stand B4, London Heathrow Airport

Type of Flight: Public Transport

Persons on Board: Crew - 6 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Right aileron control tab damaged

Commander's Licence: Not relevant

Commander's Age: Not relevant

Commander's Flying Experience: Not relevant

Information Source: Incident Investigation Report and Ramp Alert submitted by the company and AAIB enquiries

The driver of an electrically operated Hamech baggage tug was to collect empty baggage containers from the aircraft's rear hold. As the tug manoeuvred towards the hold, it hit the right aileron and damaged the control tab; the aircraft was taken out of service while the tab was replaced. Although the aircraft crew were on board, they played no part in the accident.

Drivers are required to approach the aircraft at right angles and to stop about 20 feet from it; this not only confirms that the brakes are working effectively but reduces the final approach speed. The tug should then follow the line of the wing towards the fuselage before turning the vehicle away from the wing to face the rear. This procedure was not followed; the tug was turned in the opposite direction and consequently hit the right aileron.

As part of their induction course, all staff are shown the correct way to approach an aircraft; a Ramp Alert notice, dated 19 April 1995, was issued by the company Ramp Training and Safety Manager reminding personnel of the correct procedure.