

INCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Boeing 737-3L9, G-BZZB
No & Type of Engines:	2 CFM56-3B2 turbofan engines
Year of Manufacture:	1991
Date & Time (UTC):	17 December 2002 at 0651 hrs
Location:	Stansted Airport, Stand C43R
Type of Flight:	Public Transport (Passenger)
Persons on Board:	Crew - 5 Passengers - 79
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Minor damage to left wing tip
Commander's Licence:	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	50 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	13,470 hours (of which about 2,376 were on type) Last 90 days - 135 hours Last 28 days - 10 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and further enquiries by AAIB

History of the incident

The aircraft was parked on stand C43R at Stansted Airport whilst being prepared for departure for a scheduled public transport flight to Amsterdam. After the doors were closed, the leading hand of the pushback crew carried out a visual 'walk around' inspection of the pushback area to ensure that it was clear of obstructions. He then positioned himself on the right side of the aircraft where he could communicate with the aircrew.

An Airbus A321 was parked on stand C43L to the left of the incident aircraft. Before G-BZZB was pushed back, a ground servicing vehicle, which had been catering the A321, reversed from the aft right side of the A321 and parked in the clearway between the paths of the two aircrafts' wingtips. The clearway was marked by discontinuous white parallel lines approximately 6 metres apart. The nosewheel of the 737 was off to the right hand side of the stand centreline and therefore the tug driver began his pushback with a correction to realign the nosewheel. During the pushback the left

wing tip of the 737 struck the parked servicing vehicle. Both the servicing vehicle and aircraft sustained minor damage.

Analysis

The commander of the aircraft assessed that the contributory factors to the incident were: (1) a reduction in vigilance on the part of the pushback crew while they were monitoring the start of the right engine and (2) the limited clearance between the wing tips of two aircraft of that size on the adjacent stands.

According to the report by the Airport Authority, both operators of the pushback were aware of the vehicle and its position but were under the impression that there was more room available for the manoeuvre than there actually was. Both crew members of the servicing vehicle were outside their vehicle but were unable to warn the tug driver in sufficient time to prevent the incident.

The Airport Authority had issued a Director's Notice on *Apron Area Numbering System and Stand Size Limitations* on 12 October 2000. The notice stated: '*Interstand Roads/Clearways are provided on either side of an aircraft stand. Parking of vehicles in these areas is prohibited unless the driver remains with the vehicle.*' Equipment areas are provided for parking near aircraft stands.