

MD 83, SE-RBI

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Category: 1.1

INCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration: MD 83, SE-RBI

No & Type of Engines: 2 Pratt & Whitney JT8D-219 turbofan engines

Year of Manufacture: NK

Date & Time (UTC): 12 June 2001 at 0836 hrs

Location: Stand 216, Manchester Airport

Type of Flight: Public Transport (Passenger)

Persons on Board: Crew - 8 Passengers - 146

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: 2 overheated batteries

Commander's Licence: Airline Transport Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 52 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 16,700 hours (of which 9,010 were on type)

Last 90 days - 50 hours

Last 28 days - 30 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

When the crew arrived at the aircraft to prepare it for departure the commander was informed by maintenance personnel that for some unknown reason one of the two aircraft batteries was discharged and the Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) could therefore not be started due to low voltage. Furthermore there was no ground power unit (GPU) available. Eventually a GPU was provided and when sufficient battery charging had taken place the APU was started and the GPU disconnected.

Some time later during passenger boarding the pilots noticed an unidentifiable odour in the cockpit. Maintenance staff, located on the ramp, shouted up to the pilots on the flight deck that smoke was emanating from the Electrical and Electronic (E&E) bay compartment door beneath the fuselage. The commander summoned the purser to the flight deck, informed him of the situation, turned off the battery switch and shutdown the APU.

By now smoke was starting to fill the cockpit and there was no power available to communicate with the emergency services or ATC. The main cabin door was blocked by disabled passengers still in the process of boarding; the emergency slides had not yet been armed and only emergency lighting was available (powered by separate dedicated batteries). Precautionary evacuation of the passengers via the rear ventral door however was initiated by use of a loud hailer and all passengers and crew vacated the aircraft in without injury. The smoke was discovered to have been due to the boiling of the batteries , possibly due to their rapid re-charging.