

No: 11/91

Ref: EW/C91/9/3

Category: 1a

Aircraft Type and Registration: Boeing 737-210C, TF-ABJ

No & Type of Engines: 2 JT8D turbofan engines

Year of Manufacture: 1968

Date & Time (UTC): 13 September 1991 at 0620 hrs

Location: London Heathrow Airport

Type of Flight: Public Transport (cargo)

Persons on Board: Crew - 2 Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Nose gear collapsed, damage to underside of fuselage

Commander's Licence: Icelandic Airline Transport Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 46 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 12,500 hours (of which 5,200 were on type)

Information Source: AAIB Field Investigation

The crew were operating their third consecutive night duty. A rest period of 13 hours 55 minutes had been taken prior to the commencement of duty at 2355 hrs on the evening before the accident. The duty was scheduled to operate cargo sectors Helsinki-Manchester-Heathrow-Helsinki. On the cargo ramp (stand 303) at Heathrow, the aircraft was being prepared for the final sector of the duty. An approved departure slot time of 0640 hrs was initially allocated to the flight. At 0600 hrs, the despatcher noted that the aircraft loading was almost complete and, with the crew's permission, attempted to obtain an earlier slot allocation. This attempt was successful, the slot time being brought forward to 0625 hrs. The crew were informed of the change at approximately 0615 hrs. The runway in use for departures at that time was 09R, which necessitated only a short taxi from the cargo ramp.

Whilst the First Officer was securing the forward service door, the Captain obtained engine start and pushback clearance from Heathrow ATC. The Captain indicated by interphone to the ground crew that the aircraft was ready for pushback. Meanwhile, the First Officer returned to the flight deck and commenced reading the "Before Start" checklist challenges, which were responded to by the Captain. As the tug commenced the pushback, the aircraft's parking brake remained set and the nosewheel collapsed rearwards, damaging the underside of the fuselage skin and frame structure.

The pilots could not remember informing the ground crew that pushback should commence and that the parking brake was released. Subsequent replay of the Cockpit Voice Recorder indicated that the ground crew had been told that the aircraft was cleared to pushback and that the parking brake was released.