

Boeing 757-236, G-BPEI, 25 May 1996

AAIB Bulletin No: 12/1996

Ref: EW/G96/05/21 Category: 1.1

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Boeing 757-236, G-BPEI
No & Type of Engines:	2 Rolls Royce RB211-535E4-37 turbofan engines
Year of Manufacture:	1994
Date & Time (UTC):	25 May 1996 at 1315 hrs
Location:	Stand D48, London Heathrow Airport
Type of Flight:	Public Transport
Persons on Board:	Crew - 9 - Passengers - 145
Injuries:	Crew - None - Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Light scratches below forward passenger door
Commander's Licence:	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	43 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	Not relevant Last 90 days - Not relevant Last 28 days - Not relevant
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and written and telephone enquiries by the AAIB

After the aircraft had been marshalled onto Stand D48, the jetty was driven to the aircraft by the ground staff. As the jetty approached the aircraft it accelerated and the operator was unable to prevent a collision. Attempts were made to reverse the jetty but without success and therefore the passengers were disembarked with it in this position. While the jetty was in contact with the aircraft, the rubber buffers rolled downwards allowing metal to metal contact with the aircraft which caused some scoring of the fuselage.

At the time this report was submitted, the aircraft operator referred to a total of seventeen incidents involving airbridges at Terminal 1 during the period 29 December 1995 to 27 July 1996. As a result of the enquiries made by the AAIB, Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL) made a comprehensive assessment of this and the other incidents. Of these, six involved Stand D48.

It was found that the parking position for the jetty on Stand D48 is close to the limit of its travel. In this area the jetty is programmed to move at a reduced speed. Consequently, when the jetty is driven towards an aircraft, it moves very slowly for its first 1.5 metres of travel and then accelerates to its normal speed. Due to the momentum of the jetty and the limited amount of space available, this acceleration makes it very difficult for the jetty operator to prevent a collision with the aircraft. The manufacturer of the jetty has now provided HAL with a new parking position for the jetty which ensures that it does not accelerate as it comes close to the aircraft. In addition, the rubber buffers on the jetty were found to be inadequate to prevent damage to the aircraft. These have been redesigned and the new buffer is to be fitted in the near future.

With reference to the other problem 'parking' stands that were identified; on two of them the aircraft parking positions have been adjusted. For Stand C43, a notice is to be issued to pilots emphasising the importance of parking their aircraft accurately. A general problem involved some difficulty in identifying the front wheel axle of the jetties from the driving position, thereby preventing correct anticipation of the direction of movement. This has been addressed by the fitting of luminous chevrons to the rear wheel axle. These are visible in the closed circuit television (CCTV) installed at the driving position and can be checked before movement of the jetty is commenced. In addition, antiglare film has been fitted to the bridgehead windows of the jetty to enable the CCTV screens to be more easily viewed.

Since the date of this incident, HAL have had three meetings with the airline and these have resulted in the changes referred to above. Furthermore, a programme of training for jetty operators has been undertaken by the airline. Finally, HAL are continuing to monitor the two jetties which have been identified as having a problem associated with an acceleration to normal speed in close proximity to the parked aircraft.