

Boeing 737-73V, G-EZJU

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/2004	Ref: EW/G2004/07/18	Category: 1.1
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Boeing 737-73V, G-EZJU	
No & Type of Engines:	2 CFM56-7B20 turbofan engines	
Year of Manufacture:	2003	
Date & Time (UTC):	19 July 2004 at 0840 hrs	
Location:	Stand 13, Belfast International Airport, Northern Ireland	
Type of Flight:	Public Transport (Passenger)	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 5	Passengers - 137
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Two gashes, 30 cm and 20 cm just forward of the air stairs door	
Commander's Licence:	Air Transport Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	29 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	5,040 hours (of which 2,500 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 157 hours	
	Last 28 days - 75 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Forms submitted by the pilot and tug operator	

Having boarded all passengers and received push-back and start clearances, the crew were part way through their 'cleared for start' checklist when they heard and felt an impact against the aircraft. The checklist was discontinued whilst the captain talked to the ground crew through the open left direct vision (DV) window, and established that a vehicle collision had occurred. The push-back was cancelled, the shutdown checks completed and the cabin crew instructed to disarm the doors and deploy the airstairs.

On vacating the aircraft to investigate, the captain saw that a tug, which was normally used to move steps and other items of ground equipment around the apron area, had collided with the left side of the aircraft below the flight-deck windows, between the total air temperature (TAT) probe and the forward jacking point. The collision had resulted in two large penetrations of the outer skin of the aircraft, some 20 cm and 30 cm in length respectively. The operating company was notified, together with the handling agents and airport authorities, and the passengers and crew disembarked.

The driver of the tug reports that whilst attempting to apply the foot brake, he inadvertently put his foot on the accelerator causing the vehicle to move rapidly towards the aircraft. Although outside the two-metre area-control, the driver was unable to stop the vehicle in time to prevent the nearside corner

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of tug's roof from striking and puncturing the left side of the fuselage. During his attempt to avoid the collision, the driver turned the steering wheel hard left; as a consequence, a lamp-cluster mounted on the nearside rear corner of the tug's roof struck the fuselage side as the vehicle came to rest, resulting in a second penetration of the fuselage skin.