

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/93

Ref: EW/G93/08/08

Category: 1.1

Aircraft Type and Registration: Boeing 737-436, G-DOCK

No & Type of Engines: 2 CFM 56-3-C1 turbofan engines

Year of Manufacture: 1992

Date & Time (UTC): 8 August 1993 at 1822 hrs

Location: Stand A1, Terminal 1, London Heathrow Airport

Type of Flight: Public Transport

Persons on Board: Crew - 6 Passengers - 102

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Impact damage to rear cargo hold frame structure

Commander's Licence: Airline Transport Pilot's Licence

Commander's Age: 47 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 11,400 hours (of which 1,400 were on type)
Last 90 days - 98 hours
Last 28 days - 41 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and further enquiries by the AAIB

The aircraft was being prepared for a scheduled service departure, with the crew and passengers on board. An Avialift APT-750 Belt Loader (self powered baggage loading conveyor belt vehicle) had been positioned at the rear cargo door at the time of the aircraft's arrival from its previous flight. The end of the conveyor belt was just inside the rear cargo hold. The person who positioned the vehicle had left it with the steering wheel turned to full travel, and the engine switched off. A member of the ground crew assigned to dispatch the aircraft started the engine with the intention of removing the vehicle from the vicinity of the aircraft. On selection of reverse gear on the automatic transmission, the vehicle snatched and, because of the wheel displacement, the end of the conveyor belt moved sideways and impacted the door frame.

The driver immediately informed an engineer, who in turn informed the commander. The aircraft was withdrawn from service for repair.

This year, up until mid July, there have been 46 reported occurrences of damage to aircraft at Heathrow which have involved ground vehicles/equipment.