

EMB-145EP, G-SAJK /
CESSNA P210N, G-CDMH

London Southend
Airport

07 August 2019

Serious Incident

Investigation Synopsis

An Embraer 145 landing at London Southend Airport ran over a general aviation towbar which had been dropped on the runway. No damage was caused to the aircraft. The investigation found that the towbar had fallen from a Cessna 210 which departed Southend Airport 30 minutes before. The Cessna pilot had likely been distracted during his pre-flight checks by an earlier road traffic incident in which he was involved, and had inadvertently left the towbar attached.

One Safety Recommendation has been made to the CAA to improve the visibility of general aviation ground equipment.

Safety Recommendation 2020-004

Justification

Increasing ground equipment visibility.

Therefore, the following safety recommendation was made:

Safety Recommendation 2020-004

It is recommended that the Civil Aviation Authority communicate to the general aviation community the importance of increasing the visibility of ground equipment.

Date Safety Recommendation made: 16 January 2020

LATEST RESPONSE

Response received: 22 February 2021

The General Aviation Unit within the CAA have created a communications campaign on the risk and mitigation actions surrounding the Southend serious incident and made a clear call to action to pilots to consider painting their tow bars in bright colours. Firstly, the AAIB report was highlighted to the community via Skywise with a request for pilots to consider painting their tow bars in bright colours. This was followed by a call on social media for pilots to show and tell the CAA what colour they had painted their own tow bars and to encourage those that haven't, to follow suit. An article was written about the Southend incident and shared via Skywise, highlighting the factors that led to the event; lack of visibility of the tow bar and inadequate checks due to distraction. Again, a call to action was made to pilots to paint their tow bars in highly visible colours and for them to consider if they are fit to fly. On behalf of the CAA, GASCo have also contributed to the campaign with a slide on external checks as part of covering the incident within their March and April 2021 safety webinars. Once these presentations have commenced the CAA hope to have further reduced the risk of this incident re-occurring and will have fulfilled the above recommendation.

Safety Recommendation Status

Closed

AAIB Assessment

Adequate

Action Status

Planned Action Completed

RESPONSE HISTORY

Response received: 26 March 2020

The AAIB acknowledges that the CAA is working with the General Aviation Safety Council (GASCo) to highlight the need for thorough pre-flight external checks as part of the GASCo Safety Campaign for 2020. The AAIB requests the CAA to confirm that this includes specific reference in that 2020 Safety Campaign to the importance of increasing the visibility of ground equipment, and to inform the AAIB when it considers its actions complete.

AAIB Assessment – Partially Adequate Open

(SRIS Reference: GB.SIA-2020-0004)