

SERIOUS INCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Boeing 777-200, AP-BGZ	
No & Type of Engines:	2 General Electric GE90-110B1 turbofan engines	
Year of Manufacture:	2006 (Serial no: 33782)	
Date & Time (UTC):	22 August 2019 at 1625 hrs	
Location:	Birmingham Airport	
Type of Flight:	Commercial Air Transport (Passenger)	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 11	Passengers - 209
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	None	
Commander's Licence:	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	61 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	22,500 hours (of which 9,000 were on type) Last 90 days - 180 hours Last 28 days - 60 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

Following pushback and engine start the aircraft began to taxi before ground crew and equipment had moved away. The aircraft struck the towbar, damaging it and the taxiway surface.

History of the flight

The aircraft was departing Birmingham en route to Islamabad and, following a normal pushback, it was stopped and the parking brake was applied. The flight crew advised the ground crew to disconnect the ground equipment and give a hand signal when clear to the left. The ground crew disconnected the tug and towbar and positioned the tug to the left of the aircraft nose. The towbar was moved behind the tug so that it could be attached to the rear towpoint for removal from the taxiway.

The flight crew saw the tug clear of the aircraft to the left and observed the ground crew moving around. After a period during which the ground crew did not appear again and did not make contact, the flight crew assumed that he had left the aircraft. They attempted to gain the ground crew's attention with gestures from the flight deck and via the intercom but were unable to do so. The aircraft commander, believing they were ready to taxi, asked the co-pilot to obtain taxi clearance. The flight crew did not ask ATC if they could assist in confirming that all personnel were gone from beneath the aircraft and did not receive

the final clearing hand signal from the ground crew. The time interval from the towbar being disconnected from the aircraft to the aircraft starting to move was approximately 23 seconds. The handling agent commented that it would be usual for this period to be about two to three minutes.

Shortly after starting to move, the aircraft struck the towbar and the crew stopped and applied the parking brake. Neither of the ground personnel nor the tug were struck by the aircraft. The aircraft was inspected by the airline ground engineer and subsequently cleared to depart.

The towbar and the taxiway surface were damaged during the event.

Recorded information

Video of the event was recorded by the camera on Stand 55C at the airport. Figures 1-3 show the position of the ground crew as AP-BGZ taxied.



Figure 1
AP-BGZ begins to move



Figure 2
AP-BGZ approaches the towbar and tug



Figure 3

AP-BGZ runs over the towbar

Analysis

After a normal pushback, the ground crew were cleared to remove the ground equipment and intercom in the normal manner. After a while, the commander asked the co-pilot to obtain taxi clearance from ATC even though neither had seen a clearing hand signal from the ground crew. The flight crew tried to contact the ground crew but were unable to do so, and the tug remained in view to the left of the aircraft. They did not ask ATC to remove doubt about the position of the ground personnel and equipment and, as a result, the ground equipment remained in the path of the aircraft when it began to move and a collision resulted.

Conclusion

The commander decided to taxi before all the ground personnel and equipment were clear of the aircraft. Shortly after starting to move, the aircraft struck the towbar.

BULLETIN CORRECTION

When originally published the cover page of this report stated that there were two crew on board the aircraft and 218 passengers, whereas it should have stated that there were 11 crew and 209 passengers. The cover page should also have stated that no crew or passengers were injured during the event.

The online version of the report was amended on 11 June 2020.