

Follow-up Action on Occurrence Report

**SERIOUS INCIDENT INVOLVING BOEING B737-86N, G-XLAG, AT MANCHESTER AIRPORT ON 16 JULY 2003
(AIRCRAFT TOOK OFF WITH CREW UNAWARE THAT RUNWAY WAS REDUCED IN EFFECTIVE LENGTH)**

CAA FACTOR NUMBER : F46/2006
FACTOR PUBLICATION DATE : 8 December 2006
OPERATOR : Excel Airways
CAA OCCURRENCE NUMBER : 2003/04850
AAIB REPORT : AAR 3/2006

SYNOPSIS

(From AAIB Report)

G-XLAG, a Boeing 737-86N, with seven crew and 190 passengers on board, was undertaking a flight from Manchester Airport to Kos, Greece. Runway 06L was in use but the flight crew were not aware that this runway was being operated at reduced length. This was due to work-in-progress to remove rubber deposits at the far end of the runway, which was out of sight from the 06L threshold end as the runway was built over a slight rise in the ground. Due to a difference in interpretation of information passed between Air Traffic Control (ATC) and the flight crew, the aircraft entered the runway from holding point AG, rather than the expected holding point A, and the takeoff was conducted using a reduced thrust setting calculated for the assumed normal runway length. As the aircraft passed the crest of the runway, the flight crew became aware of vehicles at its far end but, as they were now close to their rotation speed, they continued and carried out a normal takeoff. The aircraft passed within 56 ft of a 14 ft high vehicle.

The serious incident was notified to the AAIB at 1724 hrs on 23 July 2003, seven days after it had occurred. The subsequent investigation revealed further incidents had occurred during the course of the work, the most significant being on the night of 15 July 2003. On this occasion ATC had instructed three commercial passenger aircraft to go-around after they had knowingly positioned them to land on the reduced length runway. The crews of all three aircraft were unaware of the reduced length available, and, when informed, stated that it was insufficient for them to be able to land. The closest of the aircraft, a Tristar, was at a range of 2.3 nm when instructed to go-around.

The actions of Manchester Airport plc (MA plc) and National Air Traffic Services (NATS) Manchester, whilst not directly contributing to the event involving G-XLANG, raised additional concerns. In light of this, the scope of the investigation was extended to include the manner in which MA plc and NATS had planned and managed the rubber removal operation.

The operator, MA plc and NATS have now taken considerable steps to address most of the issues raised in this report.

Six safety recommendations are made:-

FOLLOW UP ACTION

The six Safety Recommendations, made by the AAIB following their investigation, are reproduced below, together with the CAA's responses.

Recommendation 2006-07

It is recommended that the Civil Aviation Authority review the measures required to protect runway safety surfaces during reduced length runway operations.

CAA Response

The Civil Aviation Authority accepts this recommendation. The Civil Aviation Authority will review the measures prescribed in CAP 168 (Licensing of Aerodromes) to protect runway safety surfaces during reduced length runway operations. The review will be completed by March 2007.

CAA Status - Open

Recommendation 2006-08

It is recommended that National Air Traffic Services consider the exclusion of operational staff in direct commercial negotiations, where there is the potential for this to result in a conflict of interest between operational best practise and commercial considerations.

CAA Response

This Recommendation is not addressed to the CAA.

CAA Status - Closed

Recommendation 2006-11

It is recommended that the Civil Aviation Authority, in conjunction with National Air Traffic Services and other air traffic service providers, jointly review the current risk analysis associated with operations from runways when at reduced length, to ensure that it remains valid.

CAA Response

The Civil Aviation Authority accepts this safety recommendation. Each Air Navigation Service Provider's Safety Management System requires a risk assessment to be completed for every change of operational procedure. Therefore, the Civil Aviation Authority will remind all Air Navigation Service Providers and Airport Operators, of the requirement to conduct a risk assessment prior to the introduction of operations from runways at reduced length.

The Civil Aviation Authority will also remind Air Navigation Service Providers of the need to ensure that, where they and the Airport Operator use separate safety management systems, a robust and effective interface between the two systems is established and maintained.

CAA Status - Open

Recommendation 2006-12

It is recommended that Manchester Airport plc include appropriate guidance in the Airport Operations Manual on the local authority planning agreements governing the use of Runway 06R/24L.

CAA Response

This Recommendation is not addressed to the CAA.

CAA Status - Closed

Recommendation 2006-13

It is recommended that National Air Traffic Services incorporate appropriate guidance in the Manchester Airport Manual of Air Traffic Services (Part 2) on the local authority planning agreements governing the use of Runway 06R/24L.

CAA Response

This Recommendation is not addressed to the CAA.

CAA Status - Closed

Recommendation 2006-14

It is recommended that Manchester Airport plc introduce a system which requires the timely dissemination and acknowledgement of any instruction issued containing operational information with safety implications, such as Operations Advice Notices.

CAA Response

This Recommendation is not addressed to the CAA.

CAA Status - Closed