



Heathrow Airport, London

July 12, 2013

Statistics

Type of fire

Aviation

Ignition Source

Technical malfunction
lithium-ion batteries

Duration of fire

90 minutes

Number of casualties

None

Cost to industry

Final financial value is unknown however, the cost of the emergency services, repair to the plane infrastructure, disruption to commuters and 200,000 engineering hours

References

BBC NEWS. 2013.[Online]. [Accessed 9 December 2014]. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-22251756>

BBC News. 2011.[Online]. [Accessed 9 December 2014]. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23294760>

Event

The Boeing 787 Dreamliner Jet model was grounded worldwide in January 2013 following technical concerns with the planes lithium-ion batteries. This incident happened months after the fleet were reinstated.

Ground crew quickly extinguished the internal fire and no one was on the plane during the incident.

Fire-retardant foam was sprayed at the airliner, and an area on top of the fuselage in front of the tail appeared to be scorched

On the same day as this incident a different Boeing 787 Dreamliner Jet was flown back to Manchester airport and aborted its scheduled flight, it is speculated to have a similar problem.

Lesions Learned

The Dreamliner Jet is capable of carrying 290 passengers; the grounding of the fleet in January followed two major incidents involving the plane batteries.

On 7 January, a battery overheated and started a fire on a Japan Airlines 787 at Boston's Logan International Airport.

Nine days later, an All Nippon Airways 787 had to make an emergency landing in Japan after a battery started to give off smoke.

Technically the batteries are not used during flight only when on braking and when on the ground however, Boeing were quick to respond indicating a new battery unit to be fitted to the fleet of 50 Dreamliner which operates at a much cooler temperature and are encased in a metal container. Boeing indicated they have used over 200,000 engineering hours to investigate and rectify the problem. At the time of the incident Boeing were manufacturing 7 Dreamliner planes per month.