

25 September 2006
(5 pages including attachments)



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❖ NOTICE ❖

TO: ALL QANTAS ACS MEMBERS

RE: ONE MAN PUSHBACK PROCEDURES

Over the weekend a member undertaking a one-man pushback in Perth was placed in a dangerous position that resulted in an aircraft under power moving towards the pushback tug and colliding with the detached towbar. The aircraft was damaged in the incident but fortunately no injury occurred to the pushback engineer or driver.

The incident itself has highlighted a number of system-induced errors that have been incorporated into local area procedures. During the event the LAME could not communicate with the engineering desk due to engine noise and the unsuitable radio equipment supplied. The level of training that the "person" in charge of the pushback requires is also not specified and in this case it would be reasonable to highlight that the LAME was placed solely in charge of the pushback after spending less than a month in Line Maintenance.

Concerns over communications, man down procedures and training have been flagged on numerous occasions during and since the introduction of the one-man procedures in 1999. Written assurances made to Mike Innes from the Qantas safety department by engineering management have not been met and at this stage the solutions offered have not eliminated the dangers that exist in the workplace. The following recommendation is consistent with the AIRC's recommendation from 10 March 1998 -

Until a full review of procedures is concluded and the appropriate equipment and training provided, the ALAEA recommends that engineers in charge of one-man departures seek the assistance of a second engineer for the duration of the pushback procedure. Minor delays may occur when additional manpower is unavailable but safety must be put before schedule to ensure workplace hazards are minimised.

It is only when emergencies arise that the serious nature of system induced errors becomes evident. The above incident could have occurred to any one of our members and should not be dismissed as another near miss that could have been avoided. The Federal office will notify members when it is safe to recommence one-man aircraft pushbacks on designated one-man gates. Some background attachments accompany this notice.

STEVE PURVINAS
Federal Secretary

"To undertake supervise and certify for the safety of all who fly."



MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL LINE MAINTENANCE STAFF

FROM: GENERAL MANAGER LINE MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS

DATE: 23 AUGUST 1999

REF: LMS.093/ (In)

SUBJECT: LINE MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS UPDATE

Domestic Workchange Project - One-LAME Transit

Trial

Commissioner Wilks recommended that a trial should run for approximately 3 months in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, details of the trial are as follows:-

STATION	B737	Activity	B767	Activity
SYDNEY	July 1998	294/week	November 1998	177/week
MELBOURNE	November 1998	290/week	March 1999	122/week
BRISBANE	May 1999	225/week	July 1999	50/week

The trial has proved successful thanks to the co-operation and professionalism of staff.

Procedures

John Mafrić has made several amendments to the Maintenance Memo based on input from staff during the trial. An MPAR has been raised to reflect these procedures in Volume 3 of the Procedures Manual and will come into effect upon implementation.

Safety Assurance

The Safety Department has approved the procedures as currently developed. It is proposed to further review the introduction of "cordless" headsets and "tow-barless" tugs.

Report Back to AIRC

It was agreed with the ALAEA to report back to Commissioner Wilks in September.

Rosters

Dependent upon the report back as above, Qantas has suggested that committees be set up in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide, under the chairmanship of the local Manager, to explore options to achieve the proposed dayshift manpower levels, SYD/MEL - 21, BNE - 12, ADL - 9, which includes supervision.

BRUCE DEAHM

NOV. '99 (WED) 15:50

LINE MAINT OPS

FAA TUI 2 0000000

From: Mike Innes on 22/09/99 10:38
To: John Maltrici/SYD/QANTAS@QANTAS
cc: Michael Kemmis/SYD/QANTAS@QANTAS, Dennis Ratcliffe/SYD/QANTAS@QANTAS, Bruce Deahm/SYD/QANTAS@QANTAS
Subject: Line Maintenance Workchange Project

John,

I've just received a fax copy of your memo to Warren Gilbert, thank you. Based on the assumption that the amendments you've sent to Warren will all be included in the procedures, following is my revised analysis and final recommendations.

As directed by Commissioner Tony Wilkes on 10th September, could you please send Shane Kenny a copy of this report ASAP, so that he (representing the ALAEA) and I may work through any outstanding issues the ALAEA have (also as directed by Commissioner Wilkes). Please note that it is now 12 days after Commissioner Wilkes gave me one month to conclude these discussions with the ALAEA, so time is of essence.

Cheers,

Mike

From: Mike Innes on 09/09/99 02:50 PM

Line Maintenance Workchange Project

As discussed during the past two weeks, I have analysed the available information and formed my conclusions. Following is a brief summary of my conclusions, recommended further amendments to the transit procedures and other associated information.

CONCLUSIONS

As you are aware, my ultimate desire would have been to completely remove the pushback engineers from the tarmac (ie - by riding on the tow-motor), and thereby substantially reduce the risk of serious injury to staff involved in the pushback process. For various reasons, this has not been achieved. Notwithstanding, even if the pushback engineer remains on foot during the pushback, the removal of the existing second Engineer (where appropriate - refer recommendation 7 below) still represents a marginal reduction in this risk of serious injury.

It should be noted that, due to a minor degradation of the pushback engineer's visibility and consequent control over other aircraft and vehicular traffic behind the aircraft (this is primarily a B737 issue), there is a marginal increase in the risk of collision with the aircraft tail during pushback.

It should also be noted that I consider these single-Engineer procedural changes one step in the evolution towards a significant reduction in the risk of serious injury to your staff. Given the undertakings you have made to me regarding the inevitable introduction of cordless headsets and alternative technology tow-motors (eg - towbarless tractors), I am confident that these changes represent a move in the right direction.

The bottom line is, in light of my assessment of available research data regarding pushback accidents, feedback from staff involved in the trial and my personal observations during the trial, I conclude that the single-Engineer transit procedures provide a marginal reduction in overall risk. I therefore support permanent introduction of these new procedures, initially into the Domestic Line Maintenance operation, on the condition that the following 12 recommendations are fully incorporated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Amend the 20th September memo to Warren Gilbert, amendment to "TR&D" procedure, page 1, 1.

immediately after establishing initial contact with the Tech Crew (ie - after plugging in the headset), before the commencement of pushback, advise that a "single Engineer pushback procedure" is about to be utilised.

NOTE: The exact phraseology used in this procedure should be developed by you, in consultation with relevant staff (Kash Gillies?), to be consistent and compatible with current aircraft departure procedures (refer E&M PM 3-30 011).

7. Arrange for Flight Operations Management to familiarise all relevant (ie - initially B737) Tech Crew with these procedures.
8. In respect of all of the above recommendations, implement whatever Supervisor and enforcement procedures as are necessary to ensure strict compliance.

Please feel free to discuss these recommendations with me if any clarification is necessary.

Cheers,

Mike

Appendix 2:

From: Mike Innes on 03/09/99 17:53
To: John Mafrci/SYD/QANTAS@QANTAS
cc: Bruce Deahm/SYD/QANTAS@QANTAS, Ken Lewis/SYD/QANTAS@QANTAS (bcc: Mike Innes/SYD/QANTAS)
Subject: Line Maintenance Workchange Project

John,

I have just received a message from Bruce Deahm, advising that I will be needed in the IRC next Friday. It is important that we get our ducks in order before you wheel me into the Commission again, so I thought I should very carefully confirm the information I need in order to consider and hopefully support the "safely case" for single Engineer pushbacks.

Reference is made to our meeting with Bruce Deahm and Ken Lewis a few weeks ago. At the conclusion of this meeting, you agreed to provide me with certain documents, in able to assist me with my assessment of the relative risks associated with the change to a single Engineer pushback. Following is a summary of the documents I need and a brief commentary.

Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne "feedback log books"

I received the Brisbane log from Brian Gallagher (about three weeks ago - sorry I didn't mention this when we spoke earlier this week), still awaiting Sydney and Melbourne.

Transit, Receipt and Dispatch Procedures

I received Maintenance Memo # M0256-GEN-20-00-Apr 28/99 (also about three weeks ago).

* Statement regarding your intention to purchase cordless headsets *

A brief statement is contained in your 16th August memo (which arrived in my IN tray yesterday), describing your preference for cordless headsets. Your brief commentary falls somewhat short of the assurances I would prefer, for me to be convinced of your commitment to the purchase of cordless headsets (I understand that you cannot set this issue in concrete, however I really need a brief statement which explicitly describes both your intention to replace all corded headsets with cordless units and the approximate timing of this programme).

Statement regarding the introduction of towbarless tractors

The statement in your 16th August memo asks a question, but does not address the issue. Again, I am looking for a general description of your Department's commitment to the eventual deployment of towbarless tractors (you may confer with Mike Walsh in Airports before making this commitment).

Man down procedure

Your 16th August memo includes a copy of local procedures which were disseminated at Melbourne Airport. I have no evidence that these procedures have been implemented in Brisbane and Sydney, nor whether they have also been communicated to Tech Crew via Flight Operations Management. Ultimately, these procedures will need to be fully integrated with the Transit, Receipt and Dispatch Procedures.

Tow bar crossing procedure

Your 16th August memo includes reference to this issue being a Melbourne problem which has been resolved. This does not address the overall issue. Either a comprehensive safety procedure or an explicit total ban must be included in the Transit, Receipt and Dispatch Procedures.

It should be noted that some of the above issues formed part of a directive issued to me by Commissioner Wilkes when we appeared before him on 3rd July last year, therefore it gives me more than a little discomfort to be in a position of appearing before him again next week while these issues remain unresolved. Please also note that I will need at least 48 hours to consider all of the documents you provide, before finalising my safety risk analysis.

Please give me a call (2-8375) to discuss. It may be necessary for us to meet again ASAP (also with Bruce Deahn, Ken Lewis and David Filippetto?) to resolve these outstanding issues.

Cheers,

Mike

Appendix 2: