



Civil Aviation Authority  
**SAFETY NOTICE**  
Number: SN-2021/014



Issued: 12 June 2021

## Pitot Blockage Events

**This Safety Notice contains recommendations regarding operational safety.**

Recipients must ensure that this Notice is copied to all members of their staff who need to take appropriate action or who may have an interest in the information (including any 'in-house' or contracted maintenance organisations and relevant outside contractors).

<b>Applicability:</b>	
<b>Aerodromes:</b>	All – Awareness
<b>Air Traffic:</b>	All – Awareness
<b>Airspace:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Airworthiness:</b>	Maintenance, CAMO, Part CAMO, Part CAO
<b>Flight Operations:</b>	All CAT / SPO / NCC / GA
<b>Licensed/Unlicensed Personnel:</b>	All – Awareness

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The UK CAA and AAIB have been advised of three separate events occurring at London Heathrow Airport between 9 June 2021 – 11 June 2021, whereby aircraft have been subject of pitot blockages that resulted in airspeed discrepancies and associated crew actions. The cause of these events are the subject of ICAO Annex 13 investigation, which the UK AAIB is undertaking, however initial feedback suggests a form of insect infestation may have contributed to these events.
- 1.2 The aircraft involved, were of different types and had been in low utilisation operation. These had been subject to parking for periods of 3 -7 days at various locations within the airport.
- 1.3 The UK CAA advises operators, maintenance, and continuing airworthiness management organisations that whilst the investigation is on-going, these events may not be isolated to this airport and the time for the blockages to occur is unknown.

### 2 Action to be Taken

- 2.1 Operators, Maintenance Organisations and Continuing Airworthiness Management Organisations are to ensure compliance with the Original Equipment Manufacturers / Type Certificate Holders – Operational Suitability Data (OSD) specifically relate to aircraft storage, pre-flight inspections and unreliable airspeed information.

- 2.2 Crews should be made aware of this potential issue, reminded of the importance of the speed checks during the take-off roll and the actions to be taken in the case of a discrepancy, as well as the appropriate unreliable speed indications for their aircraft type should they discover the issue once airborne.

### **3 Further Information**

- 3.1 The UK CAA has issued the following Safety Notices related to returning aircraft to service and Aviation Recovery Post Covid-19

[SN-2020/013 Returning Aircraft to Service from Extended Parking](#)

[SN-2021/012 Operational Resilience – Aviation industry recovery post Covid -19](#)

### **4 Queries**

- 4.1 Any queries in relation to this Safety Notice should be directed to [airworthiness@caa.co.uk](mailto:airworthiness@caa.co.uk).

### **5 Cancellation**

- 5.1 This Safety Notice will remain in force until further notice.