

National News

Heathrow fire investigation begins

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All services have resumed at Heathrow Airport, which was temporarily closed to all flights as emergency services dealt with the fire

An air accident investigation is under way after an Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 787 Dreamliner caught fire at Heathrow Airport.

The aircraft, which has been plagued with problems since its launch, caught fire while on a remote parking stand shortly after 4.30pm on Friday, said a Heathrow spokesman.

Nobody was on board at the time of the incident and there were no injuries, he added. Runways were closed to all flights for an hour and a half while emergency crews dealt with the incident, causing diversions and long delays for passengers.

Meanwhile, Thomson Airways said a Dreamliner flight from Manchester to Florida had to be diverted back to the UK earlier today due to a "technical issue". Boeing temporarily withdrew the Dreamliner from service earlier this year for modifications after concerns that batteries on board could cause fires.

A Heathrow spokesman said: "Heathrow's runways are now fully open following an earlier fire on board an Ethiopian Airlines aircraft which the airport's emergency services attended.

"The aircraft was parked on a remote parking stand and there were no passengers on board. Arrivals and departures were temporarily suspended while airport fire crews attended to this incident. This is a standard procedure if fire crews are occupied with an incident."

The fire appeared to have caused damage to the top of the plane's fuselage.

An Air Accidents Investigation Branch spokesman said: "We are aware of the incident at Heathrow and have sent a team to investigate."

A Boeing spokesman said: "We're aware of the event. We have Boeing personnel on the ground at Heathrow and are working to fully understand and address this."

Boeing shares fell sharply on the New York Stock Exchange after news broke of the incident.

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