

Operational Advice Notice

Solitary Bees

It is the responsibility of all employers to ensure that relevant OANs are brought to the attention of their staff. However, individuals remain responsible for their own actions and those who are in any doubt should consult their Supervisor or Manager.

1. Introduction

In June & July 2021, several aircraft operating at Heathrow suffered from abnormal pitot/static system events, two of which resulted in rejected take-offs. This resulted in the CAA issuing a Safety Notice [SN-2021/014 Pitot Blockage Event](#), supported by an Operational Advice Notice (OAN), which was cancelled in October 2021, once the risk period had ended.

The subsequent AAIB investigation identified the cause to be the nesting activity of certain species of wasps and bees within pitot probes. The AAIB Investigation Report published on 27th January 2022 referred to the Safety Actions taken by the CAA, Airline Operator & Aerodrome Operator.

It commented that; *The airport operator has been updating its management of airport environmental hazards to include a layered surveillance and alerting plan to provide information to airline operators on when the risks posed by insects increase. To enable the operators to put in place, when necessary, additional control measures in mitigation, such as enhanced use of pitot covers or additional pre-flight inspections.*

This OAN introduces the layered surveillance and alerting plans that will be in place during this year's risk period. Due to the species involved only being active and in flight throughout the summer, from June to August (although this can vary and can start in May and continue until September and early October).

Therefore, this OAN is effective from the published date and will be cancelled at the end of the risk period.



2. Definitions

Abbreviation	Description
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority
AAIB	Aircraft Accident Investigation Branch

3. Safety Procedure

3.1 As outlined in the CAA Safety Notice (SN2021/014), Airline Operators should apply the following during the above risk period:

3.1.1 Maintenance Organisations and Continuing Airworthiness Management Organisations should ensure compliance with the Original Equipment Manufacturers / Type Certificate Holders – Operational Suitability Data (OSD) which specifically relate to aircraft storage and pre-flight inspections.

3.1.2 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.

3.1.3 Operators should also ensure that where an aircraft is going to be in low utilisation appropriate covers are used to cover any inlet.

4. Monitoring

4.1 A layered surveillance and alerting plan will continue to evolve throughout this years' risk period, with fifteen sites being monitored around the perimeter of the aerodrome for solitary bee activity.

4.1.1 Each site has a monitoring station, which will be checked twice a month, with the results being communicated to based Airlines initially.

4.1.2 Should activity be observed, the monitoring frequency will increase where required to daily, which will be communicated accordingly.

5. Notification

5.1 If you wish to receive notification of the output from the surveillance visits, please contact the Airfield Duty Manager (AfDM).

5.1.1 Communication will be sent after the visits are completed for all the sites, which could take several days, if no activity is observed.



5.1.2 Should a visit identify activity, then notification will be sent to the distribution list and visits increased accordingly.

5.2 If an Airline Operator is carrying out their own monitoring or observe activity, then they should notify the Airfield Duty Manager (AfDM) as required.

5.3 AfDM Contact Details; airfield.duty.manager@heathrow.com

