

From: CAA Press Office
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'DEFROST THOROUGHLY BEFORE USE', CAA URGES ACTION ON DE-ICING AIRCRAFT

The UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has issued a seasonal appeal for pilots and ground crew to not underestimate the dangers posed to aircraft of ice and ground frost this winter. As temperatures continue to drop, commercial aircrew, maintenance staff and general aviation pilots should take the job of de-icing aircraft very seriously. Ultimately, an aircraft should never take-off with any form of contamination on its wings, particularly ice, snow and frost (although some types may be permitted some frost on lower wing surfaces).

The CAA advises pilots in particular to take the free online course available on the NASA website: <http://aircrafticing.grc.nasa.gov/courses.html>. The course has been developed by an international team of professional pilots and experts in de-icing fluids and training applications. It discusses the risks of contamination, cues to alert the pilot to ground icing hazards, and actions to help ensure safe operations. Imagery, case studies, pilot testimonials, and interactive elements are used to inform the pilot and help him or her make better operational decisions.

Captain Graham Stokes, a Flight Operations Inspector at the CAA, said: "We want to ensure that staff who have anything at all to do with de-icing an aircraft take the task very, very seriously. Flight crew and ground staff need to work together as a team and training needs to be delivered properly."

In 2002, the official investigation into the crash on take-off of a corporate jet at Birmingham International Airport identified an iced-up wing as the cause. The Air Accidents Investigation Branch concluded that the Bombardier 604's fatal roll moments after take-off 'had resulted from the left wing stalling at an abnormally low angle of attack due to flow disturbance resulting from frost contamination of the wing'. All five passengers and crew were killed.

For press enquiries contact the press office on 020 7453 6030.

Notes to Editors

The full AAIB report into the Birmingham International Airport accident can be found at http://www.aaib.dft.gov.uk/cms_resources/5-2004%20N90AG.pdf

The CAA is the UK's specialist aviation regulator. Its activities include: making sure that the aviation industry meets the highest technical and operational safety standards; preventing holidaymakers from being stranded abroad or losing money because of tour operator insolvency; planning and regulating all UK airspace; and regulating airports, air traffic services and airlines and providing advice on aviation policy from an economic standpoint.

