



Civil Aviation Authority
SAFETY NOTICE
Number: SN-2025-010



Issued: 25 July 2025

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).

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

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The UK CAA have been advised of recent events occurring at London Heathrow Airport, whereby aircraft have been the subject of pitot blockages that resulted in airspeed discrepancies, high-speed rejected take-off and associated crew actions. Subsequent inspections of the pitot probes on these aircraft have confirmed the return of risk associated with Solitary Bee activity previously experienced in 2021/22 (post pandemic).

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.
- 2.3 Organisations are encouraged to raise and mitigate any risks associated with this activity within their risk management system.

3 Further Information

Solitary bees have been known to build nests in aircraft pitot probes under certain environmental and operational conditions. Based on investigations such as the [AAIB report](#) and [Heathrow Airport's operational notices](#), the following conditions tend to favour this behaviour:

- 3.1 Seasonal Timing - Peak activity occurs between May and September, with the highest risk in June to August. This aligns with the bees' natural nesting season in temperate climates.
- 3.2 Environmental Factors - Warm temperatures and dry weather encourage bee activity. Operator feedback suggests that bee nesting occurrences in pitot probes is more prevalent when an elevated overnight temperature (>12°C) occurs follows a high day temperature (>26°C). Proximity to green spaces, gardens, or areas with flowering plants increases the likelihood of bee presence.
- 3.3 Aircraft Utilization Patterns - Low aircraft utilisation or extended ground time increases the risk, as pitot probes remain exposed and stationary for longer periods. Aircraft parked near vegetated or less trafficked areas are more vulnerable.

4 Queries

- 4.1 Any queries in relation to this Safety Notice should be directed to airworthiness@caa.co.uk.

5 Cancellation

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

Appendix 1

Examples of blocked pitot probes found during inspection:

