

# CC5862

*Posted on 10.08.2022 by Jennifer Curran*

**Category:** [Cabin Crew](#)

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**Report Title** Lightning Strike

## Initial Report

The aircraft was hit by lightning prior to landing at [Airport] on the outbound flight (the aircraft was struck 6 times), we were delayed on the ground due to engineer checks of the potential damage to the aircraft, this caused a delay. The engineers advised physical check was necessary using a 'cherry picker' vehicle to investigate several marks on the aircraft exterior caused by the direct strike. Operations pushed for the aircraft to leave due to the flight deck FTL and magically the engineers no longer needed to check visually and the flight departed.

Many crew felt unsafe and were not confident to fly as the checks weren't completed to a 'satisfactory standard' as we were rushed to meet OTP rather than safety. The whole purpose of the delay was to wait for the vehicle for a detailed inspection but after almost 2 hours awaiting (with no success as several aircraft had been struck) it was decided without the physical inspection that the vehicle was no longer required. If this was the case then why did we need to wait for the 2 hours to begin with?

Customers reaction was generally 'good' however a few customers asked for reassurance if the aircraft was safe and 'where they could find the life jackets. Personally, if I wasn't under pressure around the security of my job, I would have refused to operate this evening on the grounds that I don't feel the engineers were 'allowed' to make a thorough diagnosis due to the pressures of the company operations department.

## Comment

The Operator was contacted with the reporter's permission. The Operator responded with very comprehensive details, backed by evidence and their planned corrective and preventative actions.

Their investigation did not establish any evidence of the staff in their contracted engineering organisation (a different operator) of being pressured to release the aircraft without carrying out the required inspections. They were prepared to admit however, that one contracted Engineer involved, whilst working in accordance with the Aircraft Maintenance Manual (AMM), incorrectly assumed that he could defer his phase 1 inspection because a phase 2 inspection would be

required.

An inspection after a lightning strike is split into two phases, as are many other inspections (Heavy/High Energy Landing or Bird Ingestion into an engine, for example) The theory being that if you do not find anything beyond a certain limit on the Phase 1 inspection, you do not have to carry out Phase 2 and the aircraft can continue in service for a set number of cycles (Landings) until more comprehensive inspections take place. This report has great merit and it was received by the operator in an open and professional manner leading to improvements in inspection standards and a review of required ground equipment.

This report highlights the need for effective communication onboard the aircraft. In this instance, had the flight crew explained to the cabin crew why the checks were no longer required then the cabin crew might not have felt 'unsafe to fly', the cabin crew in turn would have been able to have explained this to the passengers that were concerned. Communication works both ways, if you are onboard and you don't understand why a decision has been made, then ask the question. Had effective communication taken place on the day then this report probably wouldn't have been submitted.



