

Airbus A321-231, G-TTIA

AAIB Bulletin No: 12/2002 Ref: EW/G2002/02/16

Category: 1.1

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Airbus A321-231, G-TTIA	
No & Type of Engines:	2 IAE V2533-A5 turbofan engines	
Year of Manufacture:	2001	
Date & Time (UTC):	20 February 2002 at 1830 hrs	
Location:	Tangiers Airport	
Type of Flight:	Public Transport (Passenger)	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 9	Passengers - 186
Injuries:	Crew 1 (Serious)	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	None to aircraft	
Commander's Licence:	Airline Transport Pilots Licence with Instructors Rating	
Commander's Age:	48 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	10,025 hours (of which 3,540 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 104 hours	
	Last 28 days - 35 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and subsequent AAIB enquiries	

A group of women and children were travelling together on the flight to Tangier and were seated in rows 29 and 30. The seating diagram (*jpg 39kb*) of the relevant area is at figure 1.

One of the children, reported to be aged three, had been particularly awkward during boarding and did not want to sit down for takeoff. She screamed continuously when made to strap in and the others in the group seemed to have little control over her.

On securing the cabin for landing, the child again screamed when made to strap in. At this point she was sat in seat 30E between two adults. Once the cabin was secure, the purser went onto the flight deck and informed the captain. At this point the assistant purser, who was standing in the rear galley, noticed the passenger in seat 29C stand up and exchange seats with the child in seat 30E.

Accompanied by two colleagues the assistant purser immediately went to ensure the passengers in these rows were re-secured, and personally strapped the child into the seat, tight enough to prevent her wriggling free.

Meanwhile, on leaving the flight deck, the purser was informed of the situation by interphone from the rear galley. She went straight back onto the flight deck to inform the captain that the cabin was no longer secure. Once the rear cabin was re-secured, the purser was notified by interphone and the cabin crew took their seats for landing. The purser returned to the flight deck to inform the captain that the cabin was again secure before returning to her own seat. By this time, the landing gear had already been lowered.

With the cabin crew strapped in and the aircraft on short finals, the passenger in seat 30C suddenly stood up and leant over the seat in front, in which was sitting the still screaming child. Fearing the passenger was about to release the child, the assistant purser rushed forward to prevent her doing so. Having made the passenger sit down again she realised the aircraft was just about to land and quickly attempted to return to her seat. She was just about to sit down when the aircraft made a very firm landing, the cabin floor coming up to meet her left foot which was in mid stride. The assistant purser immediately realised her leg was broken and fell to the floor from where she called out to her colleagues.

Two medically qualified passengers attended the assistant purser, but initially they were unable to use the aircraft medical kit as the casualty was blocking access to the cupboard in which it was stowed. She was eventually moved away from the door after supporting her leg with a tray and pillow. Attempts to use strips of blanket to provide additional support were unsuccessful because the crew had nothing with which to cut the blanket.

An ambulance was called to the aircraft but when it arrived, the cabin crew reported that it appeared to carry little if any equipment. The assistant purser was taken to hospital in the ambulance accompanied by another member of the cabin crew and she was flown back to the UK the following day by air ambulance. She had suffered a serious compound fracture of her left leg that was likely to lead to a protracted period of recovery.

A company debrief of the crew revealed that the cabin crew member seated at Doors 3, the crew seat situated towards the rear half of the cabin facing aft, had also seen the passenger stand up just before landing. She was just about to get out of her own seat to attend to the passenger when the assistant purser had done so.

Company manuals relating to the seating of cabin crew state that once seated for landing, they must stay in their seats with harness fastened until the doors to manual call is made, except for any safety related reason. Understandably, the assistant purser judged this to be a safety related incident which warranted her intervention but in responding she exposed herself to significant risk.

Safety Recommendations

Cabin crew have as their key function the safety of passengers on board the aircraft. It is important, however, that the safety of the majority of passengers is always considered and that the ability of the cabin crew to carry out their key functions during an evacuation is not prejudiced. Moreover, since passengers or crew requiring medical attention are most likely to be either seated or lying on the floor, the first aid kit should be located where it will not be blocked by a recumbent or seated person. Therefore, it was recommended to the operator that:

a. Recommendation 2002-17

Company manuals should be amended to emphasise that, when individual cabin crew members are evaluating their response to a safety issue, they should bear in mind their responsibility to the majority of passengers and the need to protect themselves so as to be physically able to carry out their key functions in the event of an evacuation.

b. Recommendation 2002-18

Guidance in the company manuals that addresses cabin crew responses to safety issues should be reinforced during cabin crew training.

c. Recommendation 2002-19

The stowage of the first aid kit in the companys aircraft should be reviewed to ensure that the first aid kit is always accessible.

Safety Action

On 22 October 2002 the operator responded to the safety recommendations. Recommendations 2002-17 and 18 were accepted and corrective action was either underway or complete. The operator accepted the spirit of recommendation 2002-19 but considered it impractical.