# British Airways Boeing 777 fire caused by co-pilot’s lever error during Gatwick take-off



# Incident of Mixed Signals: A British Airways Boeing 777 Caught Fire During Take-Off

In a remarkable and alarming incident that raises questions about cockpit protocols, a British Airways Boeing 777 experienced a fire caused by an inadvertent mix-up of left and right by the co-pilot. On June 28, 2024, during its take-off from London Gatwick Airport bound for Vancouver, the situation escalated to a rejected take-off, necessitating a high-speed emergency stop after the aircraft reached significant speeds of over 190 mph.

According to a recently released report by the Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB), the mishap was classified as an 'action slip.' As the aircraft was rolling down the runway, the co-pilot mistakenly pulled back on the thrust lever with his right hand instead of using his left. This mistake led to the brakes overheating, which in turn ignited a fire in the main wheel brakes on the right side of the aircraft. Fortunately, no injuries were reported among the 13 crew members and 334 passengers, although the fire had to be extinguished by the airport's fire crew.

The co-pilot, who had a commendable flying record with over 6,000 hours of experience, attributed his confusion to an unidentifiable reason. Despite being well-rested and having recently returned from a period of annual leave, he expressed surprise at his error, indicating that the incident was unusual even for a seasoned pilot.

The event caused significant disruptions at Gatwick, leading to a temporary closure of the runway and the cancellation of at least 23 flights. A spokesperson for Gatwick Airport stated that the fire service acted quickly to manage the emergency and that safety remained their top priority throughout the incident. Passengers aboard the flight reported alarming scenes as fire engines arrived at the aircraft shortly after the aborted take-off, underscoring the urgency of the situation.

This incident is not isolated within the framework of aviation mishaps. Previous reports illustrate that British Airways has faced challenges involving Boeing 777 aircraft, including an engine fire at Las Vegas McCarran International Airport in 2015, which required an emergency evacuation of passengers. In contrast to this recent incident, the crew at that time was commended for their calm and competent handling of the emergency, showcasing the critical importance of training and response protocols in aviation safety.

Moreover, just a few weeks before the Gatwick event, another British Airways Boeing 777 had to return to New York's JFK Airport shortly after take-off due to fumes in the cockpit. These instances highlight the various challenges that can arise for flight crews, even in seemingly routine operations.

Safety procedures in aviation necessitate vigilant oversight, extensive training, and rapid response capabilities to manage unforeseen complications. As travel experts note, such incidents, while alarming, allow for vital lessons to be learnt and for protocols to be evaluated and improved. As passenger safety remains paramount, outcomes from investigations like the AAIB's help inform future practices to reduce risks and enhance confidence among travellers.

While the British Airways incident may reflect a momentary lapse in judgment under pressure, it also serves as a reminder of the complexities involved in aviation, where even experienced pilots must navigate the dual challenges of operational procedures and human error.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14692501/British-Airways-plane-caught-fire-pilot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://aviationa2z.com/index.php/2024/06/28/british-airways-777-rejected-takeoff-closed-gatwick-airport/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14692501/British-Airways-plane-caught-fire-pilot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://aviationa2z.com/index.php/2024/06/28/british-airways-777-rejected-takeoff-closed-gatwick-airport/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14692501/British-Airways-plane-caught-fire-pilot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://airlive.net/news/2024/06/28/breaking-london-gatwick-closed-following-british-airways-boeing-777-ba2279-rejected-take-off/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14692501/British-Airways-plane-caught-fire-pilot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.inkl.com/news/british-airways-fire-pilots-praised-for-textbook-response-to-worst-nightmare)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14692501/British-Airways-plane-caught-fire-pilot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://simpleflying.com/british-airways-boeing-777-cockpit-fumes-jfk-return/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14692501/British-Airways-plane-caught-fire-pilot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

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## References

* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14692501/British-Airways-plane-caught-fire-pilot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://aviationa2z.com/index.php/2024/06/28/british-airways-777-rejected-takeoff-closed-gatwick-airport/> - On June 28, 2024, a British Airways Boeing 777-200ER, flight BA2279, aborted its takeoff from London Gatwick Airport due to overheated brakes. The aircraft was bound for Vancouver, and the incident led to a temporary closure of the runway, causing significant disruptions and 23 flight cancellations. The plane was met by fire trucks at the end of the runway before it taxied to a remote area of the airport. ([aviationa2z.com](https://aviationa2z.com/index.php/2024/06/28/british-airways-777-rejected-takeoff-closed-gatwick-airport/?utm_source=openai))
* <https://airlive.net/news/2024/06/28/breaking-london-gatwick-closed-following-british-airways-boeing-777-ba2279-rejected-take-off/> - On June 28, 2024, British Airways flight BA2279, a Boeing 777-200ER, aborted its takeoff from London Gatwick Airport due to a technical issue, leading to overheated brakes. The aircraft was met by fire trucks at the end of the runway before it taxied to a remote area of the airport. The incident caused significant disruptions, including the closure of the runway and 23 flight cancellations. ([airlive.net](https://airlive.net/news/2024/06/28/breaking-london-gatwick-closed-following-british-airways-boeing-777-ba2279-rejected-take-off/?utm_source=openai))
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-34206347> - In August 2015, a British Airways Boeing 777-200 experienced an engine fire at Las Vegas McCarran International Airport, leading to the evacuation of 170 people. The captain, Chris Henkey, reported a loud bang and the aircraft veering to the left during takeoff. He aborted the takeoff, and passengers were evacuated via emergency slides. Henkey, who had been with British Airways for 42 years, stated he was 'unlikely' to make a trip to Barbados, after which he was due to retire. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-34206347?utm_source=openai))
* <https://www.inkl.com/news/british-airways-fire-pilots-praised-for-textbook-response-to-worst-nightmare> - In August 2015, a British Airways Boeing 777-200 experienced an engine fire at Las Vegas McCarran International Airport. The captain, Chris Henkey, and his crew were praised for their textbook response to the emergency. Henkey calmly declared a mayday, requested fire services, and initiated the evacuation of passengers via emergency slides. The incident led to the evacuation of 170 people, with at least 14 taken to hospital with minor injuries. ([inkl.com](https://www.inkl.com/news/british-airways-fire-pilots-praised-for-textbook-response-to-worst-nightmare?utm_source=openai))
* <https://simpleflying.com/british-airways-boeing-777-cockpit-fumes-jfk-return/> - On June 13, 2024, a British Airways Boeing 777-200ER, flight BA176, returned to New York JFK Airport shortly after takeoff due to the smell of fumes in the cockpit. The crew dumped fuel to ensure a safe landing weight and landed safely back at JFK. The incident highlights the importance of crew vigilance and prompt response to in-flight anomalies. ([simpleflying.com](https://simpleflying.com/british-airways-boeing-777-cockpit-fumes-jfk-return/?utm_source=openai))
* <https://www.aeroinside.com/13351/british-airways-b772-at-london-on-jul-3rd-2019-fumes-in-cockpit> - On July 3, 2019, a British Airways Boeing 777-200ER experienced fumes in the cockpit during a flight from London to Buenos Aires. The crew donned oxygen masks and returned to Heathrow Airport after dumping fuel to reduce landing weight. The source of the fumes was not identified, despite extensive engineering investigations. ([aeroinside.com](https://www.aeroinside.com/13351/british-airways-b772-at-london-on-jul-3rd-2019-fumes-in-cockpit?utm_source=openai))