



## AIRSIDE SAFETY ALERT

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Reference	<b>ASA 2020/03</b>		
Date Issued	<b>22/12/2020</b>		
Issued By	<b>Dan Jones</b>	Position	<b>Airside Operations and Safety Manager</b>
Subject	<b>DISCONNECTING TOWBAR FOLLOWING PUSHBACK</b>		

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An Airside Safety Alert (ASA) will be issued to communicate immediate safety concerns relating to operations, equipment or environment, and to highlight negative safety trends. It is the responsibility of all employers to ensure that relevant ASAs are brought to the attention of their staff.

### 1. OBJECTIVE

To alert aircraft pushback teams to an incident which occurred at Bristol Airport on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020, following a routine aircraft pushback from stand 5, and the actions that can be taken to prevent similar incidents.

### 2. SCOPE

This instruction is relevant to all aircraft pushback teams working airside.

### 3. INFORMATION

A Ryanair B737-800 was pushed back from stand 5 for departure and towed forward to the Tug Release Point (TRP). On reaching the TRP, the towbar was disconnected from the tug. The headset operative then went to disconnect the towbar from the nose gear. Whilst doing so, the tug driver drove the tug forwards and to the left, ready for the towbar to be reconnected to the rear of the tug.

At this point, the tug's offside rear wheel arch came into contact with the towbar. The towbar eye became wedged between the wheel arch and the rear tyre. The towbar was then stuck solid at an angle between the tug's wheel arch and the aircraft nose gear. All passengers and baggage had to be offloaded and transferred to another aircraft and the cul-de-sac was closed. The towbar was later freed and the aircraft returned to service approximately five hours later after an engineering inspection.

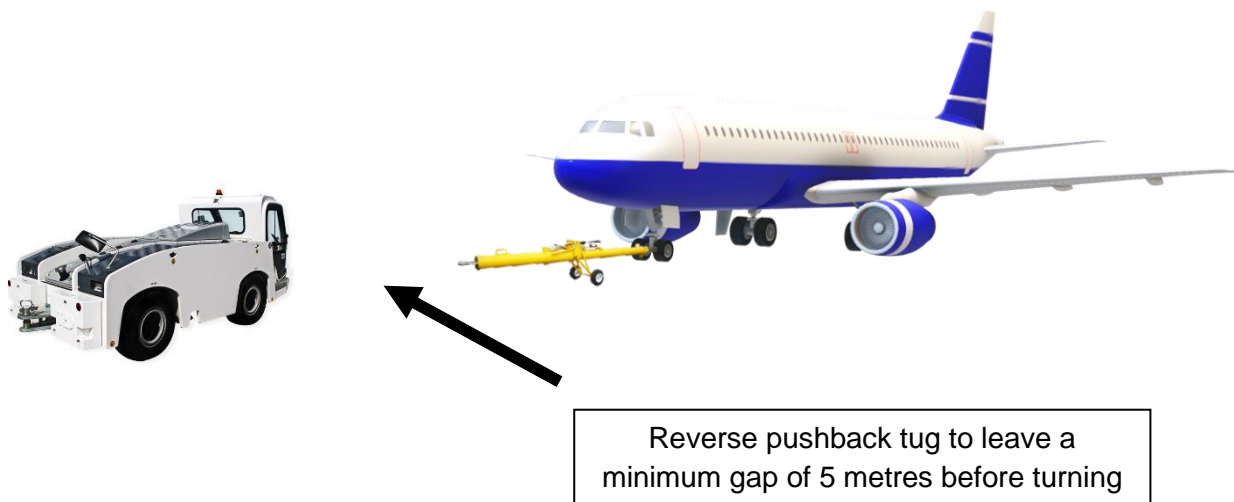
Initial findings suggest that the tug has not been reversed far enough from the towbar, before being driven away for the towbar to be reconnected to the rear of the tug. The tug was in rear-wheel drive at the time resulting in the back end of the tug coming closer to the aircraft and towbar.



#### 4. INSTRUCTIONS

It is recommended that, after disconnecting the towbar from the pushback tug, that the tug is reversed a **minimum of 5 metres or one towbar length** from the end of the towbar\*. This means that when the tug is driven to the side for the towbar reconnection at the rear of the tug, there is less risk of the tug hitting the towbar.

*\* This distance is achievable without the tug reversing over the double white lines at the end of the cul-de-sac.*



#### 5. GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Any enquiries or safety/near miss reports should be submitted to **Airside Operations** on **01275 473705** or **07712 792235**.