

Inspector Lemishko,

I am writing pursuant to our telephone conversation that was completed at 16:08 CDT today, and in response to your request for information regarding the event that occurred involving Shorts aircraft N617FB at KIAH this morning.

I received notification by telephone at 08:00 today that one of my company's Shorts aircraft had experienced a tire fire while taxiing on the George Bush intercontinental Airport (KIAH) in Houston, TX. Over the next 90 minutes and numerous phone calls, the complete facts of the matter came out and it was determined that the aircraft had in fact sustained substantial damage as the result of fire and the efforts of the airport fire crew, which cut into the fuselage in the course of their fire fighting action.

The pertinent facts as reported by the pilot are as follows: The aircraft was found to be 100 lbs overweight and the crew decided to burn off that weight in fuel by using a higher-than-normal power setting and riding the brakes during taxi for takeoff. While traveling westbound on taxiway NB the brakes apparently overheated, causing the wheels to overheat. Each of the main wheels is equipped with fusible plugs that are designed to blow out in the event of severe wheel overheating. The plugs on both main wheels blew out and the right wheel/brake caught fire. The plane came to rest on NB near the intersection with NF.

The fire caused severe damage to the right main gear housing, which is part of a stub wing assembly that also incorporates the attachment fitting for the wing strut. (The Shorts is a twin turbo-prop, strutted, high-wing aircraft.) At this point our Maintenance department believes that the fire cause substantial structural damage to the extent that repair is not practical. At last report the effort was still underway to remove the aircraft from the taxiway and tow it to the Atlantic Aviation FBO ramp.

My contact information is found at the bottom of this letter. Please do not hesitate to call or e-mail me for more information in furtherance of your investigation.



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