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This is my account of the events on the morning of 5/17.

We were covering SNC 1320 from IAH to AUS am ops. The route guide called for 2400 pounds which is what we requested the aircraft be fueled to when the truck arrived. Shortly after DHL began loading freight. The load supervisor asked me how much weight the plane could carry that day. I had not actually checked, and I told them 7500 pounds thinking that we would be ok with that. I did do a double check and found that that we would be about 60 pounds overweight (after calculating the 100 pound loss for start-up and taxi). By the time I had found this out the plane was just about loaded and I decided that I could just burn off the extra fuel during the taxi to get us down to our MTOW.

It was a very long taxi from the east cargo ramp to the end of our assigned runway, 8R. During the taxi I kept the power levers up higher than I normally would to burn off the extra fuel. The first indication that we had a problem was the nose yawing to the right and the rumble of what was obviously a blown main tire. Not long afterward a jet taxiing behind us reported on the radio that our right main tire was on fire. We exited the aircraft with the available fire extinguishers and tried to put the fire out. When both extinguishers were exhausted we had no option but to move away from the plane and wait for the Fire Trucks. When the fire trucks arrived they began putting out the flames with foam immediately. We then began telling our story about riding the brakes with the engines spooled up to burn off fuel to several different authority figures, including: Airport Operations, The fire chief, EPA, Maintenance, and Airport law enforcement.

Sometime during all of the questioning I overheard that the plane had a fuel leak. It wasn't long afterward that I saw them cutting into the side of the fuselage with a power saw in order to get at the fuel lines and attempt to plug them. Only after they started this did they talk to us and we told them that we thought it could be from the collector tanks that are located around the right stub wing.

With the fire crew no longer cutting into the plane we turned our attention to the mechanics we had talked to earlier to find out what all needed to be done to get the cargo off the plane and

the plane moved. There was some discussion of needing a crash dolly to move the plane and where they could find one. We also discussed the best way to de-fuel the plane since the single point fueling was most likely damaged in the fire. I ended up calling ACC maintenance and handing my phone over to the maintenance on sight so that Dwayne could better coordinate with them. Sometime after this Naomi showed up to take pictures and help us with anything we needed. The next to appear on the scene was the FAA who had a very brief interview with us. We related the same story we had told many times that morning and earlier in this report about riding the brakes to burn off fuel.

Shortly after talking to the FAA the EPA had finally approved the cargo to be removed from the plane and DHL began unloading on the taxiway into their cargo cans. With Naomi very thankfully on the scene to represent the company and the cargo being unloaded, and having talked to the FAA we were released to leave the scene. An airport operations truck drove us to Atlantic Aviation where we called a cab to take us to Contra to receive a drug and alcohol test.

I cannot put in to words how foolish I feel for this incident. I know this cost the company in customer relations and untold amounts of direct cost. Not to mention causing a huge mess at a major international airport, and causing a lot of work for many people working at the airport that day. I did not realize that I was in danger of blowing the tires much less causing a fire, otherwise I would not have attempted to burn off excess fuel while taxiing.

Sincerely,
Jim Rodeheffer