

American Airlines Grounds 787 After Engine Incident

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An American Airlines Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner has been grounded after reportedly ingesting a cargo container into its engine while taxiing at Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD). The aircraft, registered as N834AA and operating as flight AA47 from London-Heathrow (LHR), landed at ORD around 4:00 p.m. local time on October 17, 2024, when the incident occurred.

The unusual event drew immediate attention when an airport worker and former infantry marine, identified online as @WindyCityDriver, shared photos of the damaged Dreamliner. According to the eyewitness account, a passenger reported that crew members disclosed that "someone drove between two planes taxiing, and the jet blast from the first aircraft blew the containers toward #AA47, causing one to be ingested." Additional witness speculation suggested that the container may have come loose from a nearby trailer.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) confirmed the occurrence, describing it as an "engine issue" but did not provide additional details. In its brief statement, the FAA noted that all passengers deplaned normally without incident. According to the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA), there were 283 passengers and 12 crew members aboard the aircraft at the time of the engine damage.

American Airlines issued a statement, underscoring its commitment to passenger safety and confirming that the aircraft had been removed from service for inspection and maintenance. "After safely landing at Chicago O'Hare International Airport, American Airlines flight 47, arriving from London-Heathrow, reported engine damage while taxiing to the gate. The aircraft has been taken out of service to undergo a thorough inspection by our maintenance team," said an airline spokesperson. "Safety is our top priority, and we thank our team members for their professionalism and our customers for their understanding."

The exact cause of the incident is still under review, and American Airlines has not provided an estimated return date for the Dreamliner. The airline's maintenance team is expected to perform an in-depth inspection and necessary repairs to determine the extent of the damage and ensure the aircraft is flight-ready.

This unusual event highlights the critical importance of airport ground operations safety. Taxiways at major international airports like ORD are high-traffic zones, with a significant risk of unintended debris movement due to jet blasts and other operational hazards. Preventative measures are essential to minimizing risks for aircraft, passengers, and ground personnel.

American Airlines operates a large fleet of Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners, known for their fuel efficiency and long-

haul capabilities, essential to its transatlantic routes. As the airline awaits the inspection results, flight adjustments or alternative aircraft assignments may be required to accommodate upcoming schedules on affected routes. Boeing's 787 series has remained popular globally for its range, but engine incidents have led to increased scrutiny of maintenance protocols, especially on high-utilization routes like those connecting the U.S. and Europe.

This incident underscores the vigilance required in both ground operations and maintenance for major airlines like American. As the investigation proceeds, both American Airlines and the FAA are likely to implement any necessary safety measures to prevent similar incidents in the future, ensuring continued passenger confidence in air travel safety.

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