



PASSENGERS ON BA JET THAT CAUGHT FIRE IN LAS VEGAS SUE BOEING, GE

News / Airlines



Passengers on a British Airways plane that caught fire taking off from Las Vegas in September are suing the makers of the plane and its engines in Chicago, their lawyers said on Friday.

The engine of the Boeing 777 burst into flames, forcing all 170 passengers and crew to escape via emergency slides, after a part of a spool in the high-pressure compressor failed, according to findings from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

Now 65 passengers from the United States, Britain, Northern Ireland, Ireland and Germany are

seeking damages from Boeing and engine maker GE for pain, suffering, emotional stress as well as financial losses, law firm Stewarts Law said in a statement.

James Healy-Pratt, head of aviation and travel law at Stewarts Law, told Reuters the lawsuit did not specify any amount but that if there ended up being 100 claimants, then US\$100 million "would not be unthinkable". He said previously U.S. courts had been known to award in excess of US\$500,000 per passenger.

"Our clients are not critical of BA and feel that the pilots and cabin crew performed heroically in guiding the aircraft to an emergency stop, and then evacuating all occupants away from the burning aircraft in difficult circumstances," Healy-Pratt said in the statement.

But Stewarts Law and U.S. counsel, the Wisner Law Firm, say that at the time of the accident the Boeing aircraft, equipped with GE engines, was "defective and unreasonably dangerous in a number of important respects".

A spokeswoman for Boeing in Germany said the company did not comment on legal litigation matters. A spokesman for GE in the United States said GE could not comment on the lawsuit because it had not seen it yet.

"We are continuing to work with the NTSB to determine the root cause of the failure," the spokesman added.

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