

Captain's Statement  
UAL 329 DEN-BOS  
30 Sept 2023  
Dept: DEN 1959Z/1359L  
Position: Pilot Flying

I was the Captain of UA329 on September 30 from DEN to BOS and was acting as pilot flying. It was the first leg of a four-day pairing. I was coming off of days off and was rested and healthy. The First Officer and I met in the Flight Planning Area (FPA) about 1.5 hours before the scheduled departure time. While reviewing the flight plan provided by dispatch, in the notes section, we were to expect a "bleeds off" configuration for 16R departure. The First Officer and I discussed and reviewed the additional preparations required for that departure. ATIS information, that day, advertised the runways in use were 17R, 16L and 8. Because of the higher than normal temperature along with a maximum takeoff weight, airport normal operations for that day made Runway 16R an abnormal departure.

Once we arrived at the aircraft and began to pull takeoff performance data, we realized that our planned takeoff weight was more than would be allowed for a takeoff on Runway 16R (the longest runway at DEN). I made a call to dispatch and informed them of this problem. The dispatcher just came on duty and wasn't the name on the 1<sup>st</sup> release or familiar with the original flight plan. The initial flight plan was based on a lower temperature, and performance data showed 174.5k MGTOW. By the time we started accessing data via ACARS, the temp had risen to 31 degrees Celsius. After inputting all the runway/bleed scenarios, the runway data came up with a MTOW of around 172k. The new dispatcher called me back with a new revision (#2) after talking to load planning and decided to remove approximately 1,000 lbs. of cargo from the flight. I called the dispatcher back and informed her that it was still not sufficient enough. She created revision #3 with another 1,000 lbs. subtracted by removing 8 passengers. I realized that we still had 2,000 lbs. of extra fuel, so I told the dispatcher that I could burn 1,000 lbs. of fuel during the taxi. This would prevent any passengers from being removed and would prevent an associated delay. This would make our departure out of Runway 16R legal and underweight. We agreed that would be the best option. The final dispatch (#4) release required an extended taxi time so excess fuel (1,000 lbs.) could be burned off to reduce the takeoff weight.

After a normal pushback, I performed a long slow taxi to the runway with the power elevated while applying additional braking that would burn the fuel. We held short of Runway 16R with the parking brake set for an additional 10 to 15 minutes so that we could burn additional fuel. I had no indication that the brakes were getting hot. The 737 has no brake temp monitoring system on it to inform the flight crew of brake temperatures. All of the other Boeings I have flown have that kind of system. Once we were below the weight requirement, we notified tower we were ready for departure, and we were subsequently cleared for takeoff.

During the takeoff roll I quickly noticed that there was a problem. The aircraft was not accelerating normally. I rejected the takeoff and after the First Officer notified the tower of the reject, they observed and replied that we had smoke and a fire from the right side of the aircraft. We had no indication of fire in the cockpit from the engines. I requested Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting and declared an emergency with ATC. We worked with ARFF and shut down the engines while ARFF shot retardant on both main gear. The First Officer ran the rejected takeoff checklist and I coordinated with the FAs to ensure the safety of all passengers. I made multiple PAs to keep passengers informed of the situation. After all appropriate checklists were complete I decided against an evacuation based off the communications with ARFF that an evacuation wasn't necessary. At this point, approximately 10-15 minutes have passed since the

first indication of a fire occurred. Airport operations provided buses for the passengers. We deplaned the aircraft via air stairs provided by airport operations. There were no injuries during this event.