

LIAT pilots call in sick, ground flights

PILOTS EMPLOYED with the regional airline, LIAT, have reported sick for duty forcing the airline to acknowledge that there would be cancellations or rescheduling of flights on Tuesday.

The action by the pilots follows the airline's decision to terminate the services of Captain Michael Blackburn with immediate effect on Monday.

Blackburn, who is also the president of the Leeward Islands Airline Pilots Association,

confirmed to the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) that he had received a termination letter from the airline, but was not in a position to discuss it.

In a statement on Tuesday, LIAT, the major carrier linking a number of Caribbean states, said that it was advising the travelling public "that pilots rostered for duty this morning ... have called in sick".

"As a result of this action by the pilots, passengers are advised that there are likely to be cancellations or rescheduling of flights today," the airline said, urging passengers to call their local LIAT station or the airline's call centre for information on their flights.

LIAT promised that it would provide further updates throughout the day.

Last month, media reports said that Blackburn was being investigated by local aviation authorities for a recent safety violation at the George F. Charles Airport in St Lucia.

Blackburn, whose aircraft was second in line to land, allegedly ignored instructions from air traffic controllers at the airport, forcing the aircraft that was number one to land to take emergency measures, a source close to the investigation told CMC on condition of anonymity, because he was not authorised to speak to the media.

LIAT and the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority were also investigating the matter.

- CMC

