On a Roll

I was telling him that I was releasing the parking brake. The mechanic told me he thought I was truly surprised at the level of communication breakdown. Although this mechanic speaks fairly good English, I was questioning whether he was okay. He was.

My next concern was the location of the mechanic and the equipment needed to be towed back. When the aircraft was stopped and the engines shut down, I turned my attention towards the logbook, thinking about how I was going to write up this problem. The First Officer...was looking over the MEL... (Minimum Equipment List) showed this as a "return to gate" item. At this point, I told the mechanic we needed to be towed back. His response sounded like he was asking us to release the parking brake; however, neither of us quite understood his question. It just happened to come when the pilot was expecting to hear something about stopping the aircraft. At that point we were both simultaneously on the brakes... After leaving about 20 feet of skid marks on the ramp, the aircraft came to a stop with the nose wheel approximately eight feet from the end of the paved surface... without the tug connected!

When the tug operation commenced, I turned my attention towards the logbook, thinking about how I was going to write up this problem. The First Officer...was looking over the MEL... What seemed like a few seconds after we began to tug, the First Officer asked, "Where is this guy taking us?" I looked up I saw the end of the paved ramp approaching rapidly and heard the First Officer say something about stopping the aircraft. At that point we were both simultaneously on the brakes... After leaving about 20 feet of skid marks on the ramp, the aircraft came to a stop with the nose wheel approximately eight feet from the end of the paved surface... without the tug connected!

The Captain and I were reluctant to apply the brakes for the task of monitoring the aircraft. Let this serve as a reminder to do the same during tow operations. Thank goodness no one was hurt, no metal was bent, and no careers were put in jeopardy, but we sure came darn close.

Clearly Not Cleared

In this Air Traffic Controller's report, a foreign pilot misinterpreted what appeared to be a clearly stated question. It just happened to come when the pilot was expecting to hear something else.

Aircraft #2 was cleared to land on Runway 18R. Aircraft #1 (a foreign carrier) was told to, "Taxi into position on Runway 27 and hold. Traffic landing Runway 18R." Upon issuing a wind check, I realized that aircraft #1 had a seven knot tailwind. I asked if the wind was going to be a slight or strong. About 20 feet of skid marks on the ramp, the aircraft came to a stop with the nose wheel approximately eight feet from the end of the paved surface... without the tug connected!

Once we started rolling he did not tell us to stop, but instead simply unplugged his headset and got out of the way. What lessons can be learned or relearned from all of this? First of all this is a reminder of something we all know, that being towed is an operation which requires someone to be monitoring the aircraft. Secondly, never assume anything. Since we never saw the tug pull away (it pulled away while we were in the book) and we were told to release the parking brake, we thought we were under tow....

During approach briefings, simulator training, and line non-normal operations flight, someone is always assigned the task of monitoring the aircraft. Let this serve as a reminder to do the same during tow operations.

The Office of the NASA Aviation Safety Reporting System, P.O. Box 189, Moffett Field, CA 94035-0189

http://asrs.arc.nasa.gov/
problem. He acknowledged with his call sign for what I thought was receipt of my transmission, but then he throttled up and started the departure roll. Aircraft #2 was over the numbers on flare I attempted to cancel the takeoff roll and then proceeded to send aircraft #2 around. By the time aircraft #2 reached the crossing intersection, he was approximately 400 feet AGL and aircraft #1 was approximately 200 feet off his right, approaching rotation speed.

I believe that language was the problem. After reviewing the tapes, I do not see how my question of the tailwind component was misunderstood as, "Cleared for takeoff".... I guess the pilot figured that since he was in position and hold on the runway that my next transmission to him would be a takeoff clearance.

Domestic RVSM Wake Turbulence Reporting Reminder

As announced in the February, 2005 CALLBACK (#305), The FAA has requested that pilots submit reports (via NASA/ASRS) on wake turbulence incidents that occur in RVSM airspace (FL290 - 410 inclusive) in the lower 48 states of the United States, Alaska, Offshore Airspace, and the San J Van FIR.

Reporting Procedures:

Pilots reporting specifically on wake turbulence incidents should submit two forms: (1.) The NASA ASRS General reporting form for Pilots (NASA ARC 227B). The “Type of Event/Situation” block on this form should be annotated with the words, "Wake Turbulence." (2.) The FAA “Supplemental Wake Turbulence Information” form. Both forms are available for download from the “Safety Reporting” section of the FAA’s RVSM Documentation Web Page: http://www.faa.gov/ats/ato/rvsm_documentation.htm by following the links at the bottom of the page. Pilots reporting on wake turbulence incidents are encouraged to file individual NASA ASRS reports even if a report has been filed through their Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP).