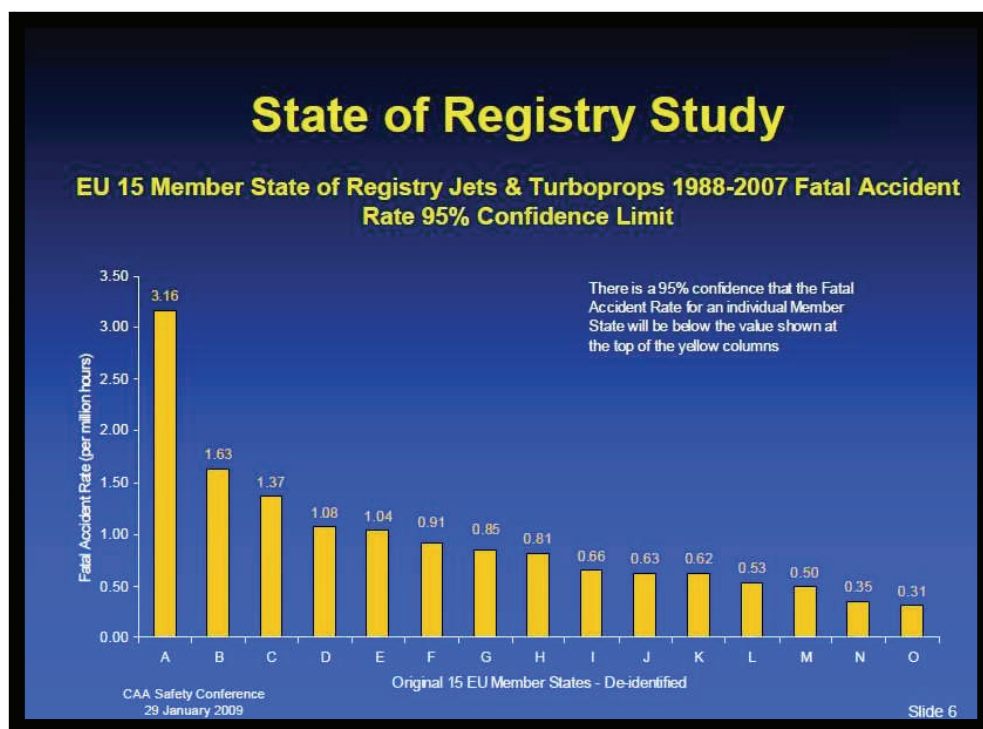




UK CAA Share AEI Concerns about Standardisation

The UK CAA are believed to be the first European NAA to have made public their concerns about the lack of standardisation and its affect on safety. Captain David Chapman, Group Director Safety Regulation, stated that he considered standardisation to be one of his greatest concerns for European safety. Captain Chapman used the slide below to amplify his point by highlighting differences in accident rates between the original 15 member states.



Furthermore the UK CAA stated that they were highly impressed with the standard of auditing performed by EASA's Standardisation department. Some have interpreted this as being critical of the European Commission in it's role of enforcing compliance. AEI affiliates have experienced first hand the extremely high quality of Standardisation visits and

the non compliances they uncover. However these non compliances are reported to Brussels should they continue past the agreed correction date. AEI despairs at the very slow response times once Brussels are involved. This is of course nothing new to AEI who have consistently supported EASA's Standardisation Department. AEI General Secretary Fred

Bruggeman commented that 'AEI have for some time now been raising awareness of the dangers of Brussels' political meddling in this safety critical area. It is of the utmost importance that EASA are given sufficient powers of enforcement in order to ensure that regulations are not only uniformly implemented as quickly as possible but also to the highest standards'.

Aircraft
Engineers
International

Special Points of
Interests:

- UK CAA raise safety concerns
- FAA Oversight of American Maintenance
- The Good, The Bad & The Ugly
- European Double Standards

Inside this issue:

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The Magnificent Seven



Our signature is our word and more precious than gold

FAA Oversight of Maintenance



*American Airlines
Grounds MD-80
Fleet*

“It is the responsibility of everyone to beware of colleagues or others that could jeopardize safety”

Last year, despite safeguards, safety systems and numerous checks and balances, airlines in the United States faced fines and flight cancellations costing them millions of dollars. What went wrong and who was to blame?

Just about a year ago, the travelling public was faced with massive flight delays and cancellations brought about by lax maintenance practices at several well known airlines. This lax attitude towards maintenance was permitted and even encouraged by FAA inspectors. Yet whenever we look at situations such as this we also need to consider the potential unethical behaviours that led up to the substandard maintenance. Mechanics, managers, inspectors and FAA inspectors all have an ethical responsibility to themselves, their airline or MRO and the travelling public. Failing to maintain those strong ethics results in a flawed safety system.

After a review of the events that lead up to these cancellations it seems that systems the FAA designed to ensure compliance

and help improve safety were being bypassed or used as a method of avoiding compliance. The true heroes of this situation however are the two FAA inspectors that called time on the unethical behaviour of their colleagues. These inspectors put their jobs and reputations on the line by reporting.

During the period of investigation, these inspectors were transferred to other duties and treated like pariah by fellow FAA inspectors and managers. These inspectors should have been rewarded for their actions. All involved in aviation should strive to meet the same ethical standards that these two inspectors displayed.

It was noted during the case that the person employed at Southwest with responsibility for compliance was a former FAA inspector. It also became clear during proceedings that inspectors were more concerned for the financial well being of the carrier they were supposed to be checking rather than about regulatory compliance.

From the testimony of the FAA inspectors involved, it would seem that their behaviour was condoned by supervisors. While the hearings included testimony concerning the Southwest issues, other airlines were not discussed. Yet we find that in March and April 2008, several airlines found it necessary to ground portions of their fleets to perform inspections. It would therefore seem that other certificate holding offices had similar programs that allowed for the operation of aircraft outside the scope of the requirements of airworthiness directives.

The two inspectors mentioned earlier reported these inconsistencies under the provisions of whistleblower protection. Once the whistleblower investigation was completed the FAA issued a memo to all airlines indicating that non compliance by one carrier would result in spot checks of others. This memo prompted more carriers to review their maintenance programs. This resulted in United, American and others grounding aircraft.

*Southwest fined
\$10 million
dollars
for missing
maintenance checks*



FAA Oversight of Maintenance Cont.

Had the airlines been doing their jobs of maintaining their aircraft properly, none of these groundings and subsequent flight delays would have taken place. Maintenance professionals need to keep their guard up so as not to be lulled into reducing the level of compliance. The regulations are a minimum standard and a higher level of safety should be achiev-

able. Much of what happened at Southwest was due to individuals within the airline willing to gamble with the lives of their passengers for short term financial gain. These individuals conspired with FAA inspectors to circumvent the regulations. While most maintenance professionals are professional and demonstrate ethical behaviour, it is obvious from this

incident that there are those that don't subscribe to the same standards. It is the responsibility of everyone to beware of colleagues or others that could jeopardize the safety of our air transportation system.

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EASA Safety Press Release

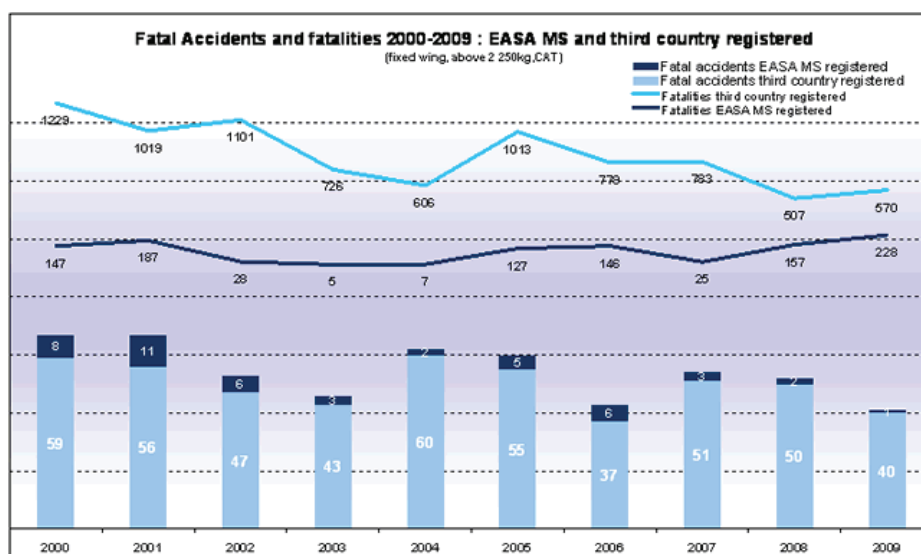
Agency issues preliminary safety data for 2009 with only one fatal accident overshadowing an excellent safety record

2009 was the year with the lowest number of fatal accidents on record for the 31 Member States of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), according to preliminary data. However this good safety record was overshadowed by the accident of an Airbus A330 over the Atlantic. This was the only fatal accident for aeroplanes registered in an EASA Member State in commercial air transport*. Despite this, the number of fatalities in 2009 (228 fatalities) is significantly above the decade average. The high number of non-fatal accidents (24) in 2009 indicates that further progress in safety is necessary. In comparison, the decade 1999-2008 had every year on average 27 non-fatal and 5 fatal accidents with 92 fatalities.

For other world regions the safety record in 2009 has been marred by an accident of an Airbus A310 in Comoros and a Tu-154 in Iran. In total there were 41 fatal accidents involving aircraft registered outside EASA Member States. This is below the decade average of 51 fatal accidents (1999-2008), but not the lowest in the decade. In these accidents there were 573 fatalities, the second lowest number in the decade.

Preliminary data shows that in 2009, the number of fatal accidents worldwide in commercial air transport with helicopters was the second lowest for the decade: only in the year 2000 the number of fatal accidents was lower. When looking at the three-year moving average, it appears that for the last five years the average is more or less constant. The accident numbers for EASA Member States remain small and no further conclusions can be drawn. Two fatal accidents occurred in Europe in 2009. Two people died in Poland when an emergency medical helicopter crashed. In April, sixteen people died when a helicopter crashed during an offshore flight from an oil platform to Aberdeen, Scotland.

Further information on safety in civil aviation will be included in the "Annual Safety Review 2009" due to be published by EASA later this year.



* Fatal Accidents categorised as such using ICAO Annex 13 definition. Accidents include aeroplanes or helicopters with maximum take-off mass above 2 250kg conducting commercial air transport operations (including air taxi, ferry/positioning and emergency medical services). Aircraft registration was used to assign aircraft into world regions. All data is preliminary and subject to review and change as more information becomes available. Cologne 08.01.2010 (EASA Press Release)

The Good, The Bad & The Ugly



Heavy Landing

The Good: How often have you heard the following from a Part 145 organisation or manager? “We are no longer responsible, CAMO and the Operator are responsible”. In this particular hypothetical scenario the A320 commercial operator was fully CAMO approved including airworthiness reviews but did not have it's own Part 145.

An A320 had undergone routine maintenance with the contracted maintenance partner including boroscope inspections of the engines resulting in no findings. After the maintenance was certified but prior to the next departure, the CAMO also extended the aircraft airworthiness certificate.

In addition both the operator and the Part 145 organisation were unaware of an airworthiness directive relating to the installed engine type listing a batch of serial numbers of engines which had to be replaced due to a manufacturing issue potentially leading to material failure. The installed engine serial number was listed in the AD and therefore should have been replaced.

However during the very next flight the aircraft was forced to make an emergency landing after

covered crack in a turbine blade which ultimately failed causing serious damage to both engine and airframe.

So who is liable here, Operator, Part 145 MRO, the person who issued the CRS or the individual performing the pre flight inspection?

Well German Aviation lawyers “Naske“ were asked for their opinion about liability and responsibility with regards CAMO and a Part 145 MRO.

The response was an extremely



interesting and informative document using the example described here to explain the situation.

Send us your opinion on who is responsible. The answer will be published in the next newsletter.

The Bad: Back in August 2009 one German airline found themselves in the midst of a strike which was severely affecting their long range operation.

So much so that one Captain, in fact the most senior, agreed to fly an 11 hour sector despite having already allegedly performed



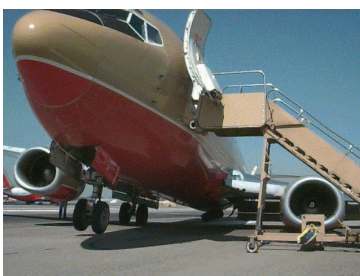
office duties for over 7 hours during the day. This was too much for one pilot colleague who promptly called the German NAA and complained, insisting that the flight should be stopped.

To his surprise the NAA refused. However this was to turn to horror when it later became clear that the NAA had informed the airline not only about the call but also who made it. The airline as one would expect dispute the reported events despite other pilot colleagues having received emails during the day from the senior captain.

The airline have threatened disciplinary action against the colleague making the report and have insisted they apologise to the NAA official. This was too much for the pilot who promptly instigated legal proceedings. The case is still ongoing but raises many questions.

AEI too have long been raising the issue of NAA's not regulating to the required standard and always it seems without consequence. It can no longer be considered acceptable that those working hands on are used as scapegoats in order to cover up inadequacies of the regulator. AEI would like to hope that the process comes to a right and just conclusion.

“the aircraft was forced to make an emergency landing after suffering catastrophic failure of an engine.”



Gear Collapse



suffering catastrophic failure of an engine. Investigations determined the cause to be an undis-

The Good, The Bad & The Ugly Cont.

The Ugly: Boeing V Gerald Eastman. The text below is Gerald's own words.

"I was not waging war against my former employer. I was simply continuing my attempts that began in 2002, four years before I was fired, to bring fraud in my department of quality and safety assurance to an end despite Boeing and the police department's unwarranted actions against me. If you know Boeing, you learn very early not to underestimate their will to perform anything and everthing they want in order to retaliate against anyone in their way as far as their own continuing breaking of the law goes.

Clean your hard disk?

Boeing headquarters was well aware I was bringing home data for my reports to the FAA and other oversight agencies. Boeing Legal also tacitly approved my going public with any info I had as they were unwilling to end

the fraud themselves, and when I said I was going to go public, their last words to me were, "you gotta do what you gotta do." They knew I was not going to drop the issue and I was going to go public with the data I had, which they (Boeing Headquarters Legal) never told me I could not have, or make public. Indeed, they approved of and/or dared me to do so. They were so arrogant they thought they could weather any press that might result and still not reform Boeing internally. Two micro-audits" they did of just my immediate work area that did not find or fix anything significant.

So I had no reason to "clean my hard disk." As Boeing was well aware I had data and had not asked for it back or told me I couldn't have it. Getting a good lawyer is not easy in any circumstance unless you make CEO level income. I did look for lawyers off and on to help me, but none stepped up to the

plate as they didn't think the risk/reward ratio would get them the money they wanted fast enough.

I knew my job would likely be doomed once I first decided to go to the FAA. Sometimes you have to think of more than just yourself, especially when faced with the brazen and widespread fraud at Boeing in my department that was driven by management. Again, my whistleblowing began in 2002 and still goes on today despite all their efforts to stop me. It was never driven by a personal vendetta. I could have had a job at Boeing forever if I did what my management wanted me to do and rollerstamped inspections off.

However, I chose to protect strangers' lives like yours by ignoring the danger to my own livelihood that seeking to protect your life by attempting to end this fraud would surely bring. My website name is factually based and is not ironic.



"I knew my job would likely be doomed once I first decided to go to the FAA"

"Boeing has been trying to "exterminate" their inspectors for some time. They have long sought to kill their independence, integrity, and drive to actually do their jobs".

The Good, The Bad & The Ugly Cont.

The Ugly Cont: Boeing has been trying to "exterminate" their inspectors for some time. They have long sought to kill their independence, integrity, and drive to actually do their jobs. The next step is to just get them off of the payroll as they will essentially be doing

nothing. Their actions against me, the last real inspector who worked at Boeing that I know of, are just a microcosm of their war against inspectors like me who understood the importance of our jobs and therefore tried to do them despite our corrupt management's extreme efforts

to get us not to. Once they "kill" me and have me locked up, they will have won their battle to illegally decimate quality assurance of Boeing airplanes.

You can follow the continuing saga on Gerald's website at: www.thelastinspector.com



Dreamliner

European Regulatory Double Standards?

EASA and the European Commission can often be found informing the world that Europe employs the highest standards possible as far as aviation safety is concerned. Safety is paramount they tell us.

Well on the face of it they would appear to be telling the truth; high safety levels, the European blacklist, local NAA audits, EASA standardisation visits all ensuring that European citizens are provided the highest levels of protection against tragedy. The list goes on and on and those outside Europe can only digest the information with envy.

So why is there so much criticism of NAA's, EASA and the EU?

Well the alarm bells should have already been ringing with the recent revelations about the poor oversight of airlines in the United States by the FAA. This should have been a wake up call for those in Europe who still

arrogantly proclaim "it couldn't happen here" but regrettably the similarities of the situation were ignored.

Despite all the claims of high standards from both sides of the Atlantic, it is in fact an Asian country, Vietnam, that is leading the way in dealing with wayward airlines and MRO's.

Jetstar Pacific based in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam have been severely criticised for implementing below par maintenance standards. However the reaction from the Vietnamese NAA is to be applauded. A full investigation was carried out which has confirmed that an extremely serious situation was developing despite all the denials.

The Vietnamese NAA report is damning not least because it also details what appears to be persecution of engineers who were prepared to speak out and say "no" to the lowering of safety and standards.

To list all of the non compliances would require too much space however suffice to say, quite a few of them have a familiar ring to them:

1. Release to service issued by unqualified personnel including pilots
2. Defects not properly recorded by flight crews
3. Cat A working beyond scope of approval
4. Failure to properly audit outsourced contracts

However the Vietnamese NAA should be applauded for their no nonsense response. Immediate reactions consisted off but were not confined to:

1. The General Director, Technical Quality Manager and Maintenance Manager all lost their Form 4 approval
2. Pilots release to service authorisations revoked

(Continues below)



"Numerous technical engineers and pilots have made errors in maintenance "

"Jetstar Pacific's primary fault was to build and operate weak maintenance systems, which allowed numerous mistakes to occur throughout the maintenance processes."

European Regulatory Double Standards? (Cont.)

Another worrying aspect of this situation is that the report itself could equally have been describing several European airlines and MRO's. The non compliances listed above are common throughout EASA members states yet the organisations involved continue to avoid their

responsibilities, usually without consequence. It is often stated that "the best form of defence is attack". This appears to be the logic currently employed by Europe. Deny all claims of non compliance within member states but produce a blacklist banning foreign air-

lines to deflect attention. Unfortunately it seems to work. But for how long?

Professional respect must therefore go to the Vietnamese NAA for reminding all European NAA's and EASA, how it should be done.



"Jetstar Pacific and its maintenance and safety record were sound"



What Was It?

The picture in the last newsletter showed the damage than can be caused to tyres by an aircraft leaving the runway during landing. Despite this the aircraft continued its flight schedule with the tyres eventually being replaced back at base during a planned night stop. Yet another timely reminder of the importance of pre flight inspections requiring a certificate of release to service.

The crew of this aircraft clearly placed passenger lives at additional but unnecessary risk. The picture on the left from the last newsletter was just the sidewall damage. The picture on the right shows the remaining damage to the same tyre.

When will the regulators finally learn that commercial pressure can only lead to disaster?



What is it?

Disclaimer



pr@airengineers.org

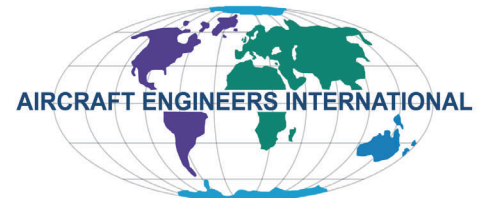
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The AEI newsletter is non political, straight talking and deals directly with safety issues

We keep them flying safely!