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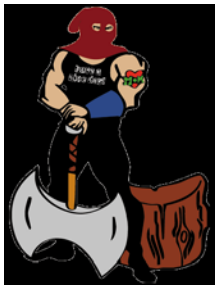
Mechanic Sentenced for Fraud, Money Laundering

On December 3, Robert Schlotzhauer of Lee's Summit, Mo., was sentenced to 12 months home confinement and ordered to pay a $550,000 fine and $63,854 in restitution to Rainbow Air of Niagara Falls, N.Y.

According to the U.S. attorney for the Western District of Missouri, in April 2001 Schlotzhauer purchased a wrecked McDonnell Douglas 369E helicopter then bought another wrecked 369E that had been submerged in the Pacific Ocean near Australia after an accident. Schlotzhauer took components from the first 369E and installed them in the ocean-damaged 369E then sold the resulting helicopter to Rainbow Air. He also repaired and returned to service a compressor from the ocean-damaged helicopter's engine, then sold it, claiming it had been involved in a hard landing.

The court ordered Schlotzhauer to liquidate any assets in Falcon Helicopter and Lee's Summit Turbine and surrender his FAA A&P and IA certificates and "refrain from any involvement in the business of maintaining, repairing or rebuilding aircraft."

Former Qantas Engineer Jailed For Faking Credentials



A former Qantas Airways maintenance employee has been sentenced to more than three years in prison for carrying out work on aircraft without being properly qualified.
Timothy McCormack was today sentenced to three years and five months in prison by a judge in Sydney. According to reports from the courthouse he will not be eligible for parole for at least two years.

McCormack, 27, had earlier pled guilty to several dozen charges, including performing unauthorized maintenance work on aircraft, forging a license and falsifying Civil Aviation Safety Authority exam results. In addition, he was found to have produced fake character references to the court after making his guilty plea in an attempt to secure a lighter sentence.

McCormack was originally employed by Qantas in 2004 as a junior aircraft maintenance engineer but in 2006 he produced fake documents to his superiors that led to his promotion to licensed aircraft maintenance engineer. As a supervisor this allowed him to oversee and sign off on maintenance work on Qantas' Boeing 747-400s. His fake credentials were not discovered until mid-2007.

NTSB: Air Wisconsin Philadelphia gear-up landing followed maintenance

A preliminary report by the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) reveals that an Air Wisconsin CRJ200 that landed with its left main gear retracted at the Philadelphia International Airport the night of 14 December had undergone maintenance on the main gear system before the flight.
Flight 3918, flying for US Airways, carried only its flight crew due to several hours of delays in Norfolk, Virginia, its origin airport and one of three Air Wisconsin maintenance bases.

An Air Wisconsin spokeswoman had initially said the aircraft had indeed experienced a maintenance delay in Norfolk, but that it was "unrelated to the emergency landing" in Philadelphia.

"The post-incident investigation of the aircraft revealed that the upper attach bolt for the left main landing gear up-lock assembly, which is designed to be attached to both the up-lock mechanism and the structure, was attached to the airplane structure only," the NTSB explains.

Minor damage to the aircraft included "scuff marks" to the left wing tip and the outboard end of the left aileron. Investigators noted "more extensive damage" to the flaps on the left wing, which had been ground down from the flap trailing edge, through the upper and lower skins, to the ribs.

Air Wisconsin could not immediately be reached for additional comments on the NTSB's preliminary findings.

Source: Air Transport Intelligence news

Mechanic Killed by Rotor blades

A helicopter stringing power lines for Southern California Edison crashed last week when gusty winds caused the pilot to lose control shortly after takeoff. A mechanic on the ground was struck and killed by the aircraft's rotor blades.

The helicopter was lifting a new power line in the Bouquet Canyon area of Santa Clarita when the incident happened at 9:41 am December 17, Los Angeles County Fire Inspector Ron Haralson said.

"It was hovering above the ground. A gust of wind made the helicopter spiral," Los Angeles County Fire Inspector Frank Garrido said. The aircraft came to rest inverted, with the fuselage broken in two, the Los Angeles Tribune reported.

The helicopter, a 2003 Kaman Aerospace K-1200 (similar to type shown at right), was registered to Superior Leasing LLC of Grant's Pass, OR, and operated by Swanson Aviation under contract to Southern California Edison, for work on Edison's Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project.

The unidentified pilot received minor injuries but refused medical treatment, Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Ian Gregor said. The mechanic, employed by Swanson Aviation, was identified by the coroner's office as Curtis Dale Cauthen, 31, from Arizona.

A Southern California Edison spokesman said, "We were informed almost immediately of the tragedy. Our condolences go out to the company and the employees involved."

The National Transportation Safety Board and the FAA are investigating the incident.

Air Marshall Accepted Bribes To Conduct Illegal Database Searches

Acting United States Attorney Laurie Magid and FBI Special Agent-in-Charge Janice K. Fedarcyk, announced this week the filing of an information charging defendant Fremon Myles, 43, with two counts of bribery of a public official.

The information charges that the defendant accepted two bribes while he was a federal air marshal for the Transportation Security Administration. Myles accepted the first bribe in exchange for conducting a check of a law enforcement database to see whether an individual had any outstanding arrest warrants. Myles accepted the second bribe in exchange for conducting a check of a law enforcement database to retrieve registration information for a vehicle license plate supplied to him by another individual.

"The integrity of the law enforcement community is threatened when those sworn to enforce the law violate it by accepting bribes. The law applies equally to everyone and this office will use all of its resources to investigate and prosecute those who betray their oaths," stated Acting United States Attorney Laurie Magid.

"Fremon Myles, as a Federal Law Enforcement Officer, swore an oath to the citizens of the United States to protect and defend them," said Fedarcyk. "But, instead, he betrayed that oath through avarice and greed. He served his own interests instead of the public trust."

If convicted, Myles faces a maximum possible sentence of 30 years imprisonment, 3 years of supervised release, a fine of $250,000, and a $200 special assessment.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Leo R. Tsao.

Man Beat Wife After Drinking Wine To Excess

A bizarre lawsuit has been filed by a Japanese man against United Airlines, charging that it's the airline's fault he beat and injured his wife after getting off a flight from Osaka, Japan, to San Francisco.

Yoichi Shimamoto tells the Chicago Tribune he was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and battery after he struck his wife, Ayisha, six times, injuring her face and upper lip as they were heading through US Customs in San Francisco. The couple claims the attack is the fault of the airline... which they say served the husband wine every 20 minutes on the long flight, leaving him drunk and "unable to manage himself."

The suit was filed December 5th in US District Court in Tampa. It seeks $100,000 related to bail expenses, payment of other legal costs, damages for pain and suffering, and, "...any other relief that is just and proper."

The suit was filed in the spirit -- so to speak -- of the Dram Shop Act, which assigns liability to commercial suppliers of alcohol for injuries caused by their intoxicated patrons. The law is why, in most US states, bars and other commercial outlets won't sell alcohol to anyone who is visibly impaired.

Legal experts say the airline could certainly be held responsible if the alcohol had been served in California... but at 40,000 feet over the international waters of the Pacific, it's not so clear.

James Speta, a professor at Northwestern University Law School, suggests **common sense may eventually make its way into this case.**

"The idea that the server should have stopped serving is often accepted when the injury is to a third person, such as in a drunk-driving situation," Speta says. "Generally, the courts have not been receptive to people saying, 'I asked for the drink and you gave it to me.'"

Report: Northwest B742 at Guam on Aug 19th 2005, landed without nose gear

The crew of a Northwest Airlines Boeing 747-200, registration N627US performing flight NW-74 from Tokyo Narita (Japan) to Guam (Guam) with 318 passengers and 16 crew, noticed problems with the nose gear while on approach to Guam's runway 06L, went around and entered a hold to sort the problem out. The crew checked the various gear indications and satisfied themselves, that all gear was down and locked due to the alternate gear indications. Subsequently the airplane approached Guam's runway 06L again, but the nose gear was not extended. Only after touch down the tower noticed the missing nose gear and ordered an immediate go-around, however it was too late. The airplane came to a stop suffering substantial damages. Smoke appeared inside the cabin

prompting the evacuation of the airplane. Two passengers received minor injuries in the evacuation.

The NTSB have today released their factual report via http://www.ntsb.gov/ntsb/brief.asp?ev_id=20050921X01501&key=1.

The factual report states, that the flight was cleared for a visual approach to runway 06L and subsequently cleared to land. The captain, pilot flying, asked for gear down and flaps 20, to which the first officer replied immediately "gear down". 40 seconds later the captain requested flaps 25, 3 seconds later the landing gear warning horn activated. One crew member remarked "we didn't get a gear", the captain ordered the flaps back to 20 degrees followed by the second officer stating one red gear light. The captain initiated a go-around, the airplane subsequently entered a holding.

The captain handed controls over to the first officer and ran the according checklists with the second officer. After checking, whether the gear lever was firm in the down detent, the landing gear primary enunciator switch was pressed. The second officer stated all gear down, then corrected himself "gear down not illuminated".

The captain then established, that all gear struts showed green in the alternate display. While the captain and second officer were discussing the possibility of recycling the gear, the first officer interrupted asking, what the red light would be for and whether the gear doors would be okay. After a short discussion thereafter the second officer stated, that it looks all good. The second officer then read from the flight crew operating manual, that the gear can be considered down and locked, if it is shown green in primary or alternate indicator. Upon another query by the captain, the second officer repeated "it's all down and locked".

Six minutes after the go-around the crew reported, they had sorted their problems and requested another approach to runway 06L. Cleared for a visual approach to runway 06L the captain ordered the second officer to pull (the circuit breaker of and thus deactivating) the gear horn.

The airplane touched down and thrust reversers were deployed. The second officer stated thrust reversers normal. 3 seconds later the tower radioed "Northwest 74 go around, Uh, negative, uh, nosewheel". The engines accelerated, the second officer stated 70%, both first and second officers stated multiple times "go around". 12 seconds after the first call the tower queried "Northwest 74, tower" to which the first officer replied "We are unable". 14 seconds later the cockpit voice recorder recorded a sound similiar to an impact, the captain ordered stand by with the evacuation checklist. One minute later the captain informed the passengers via the public audio, that the nose gear had collapsed.

A flight attendant reported to the flight deck, that smoke appeared in the forward cabin area. The captain advised FO and SO to secure the cockpit and went to assess the situation. The passengers from the upper deck were moved to the lower deck. As the smoke got worse however, the captain ordered the evacuation of the airplane.

The airplane had suffered substantial damages resulting in the airplane being written off. The nose gear was found retracted with gear doors closed. Severe abrasions were found along the fuselage skin due to contact with the runway, the cooling equipment duct was found destroyed due to contact with the runway. The units in the E-1, E-2 and E-3 racks suffered damage from heat and soot, the E-2 inertial reference system shelf sustained severe fire damage. Wire bundles between E-2 and E-3 showed heat and fire damage.

The nose landing gear door actuator, the nose gear-operated door sequence valve, and the nose/body landing gear selector valve were removed from the airplane for further testing. 25 hydraulic gear cycles were completed without any problem, 2 more alternate cycles using electrical motors also completed with no failure.

The nose gear landing door actuator was tested, but failed the lock and unlock test, although appearing to be within operational limits.

After disassembly of the actuator it was found, that one of the lock keys had been installed 180 degrees backward, several strands of metallic material was found in several areas of the actuator, the manual override crank gland was found lightly torqued with safety wire installed, the lock ram and lock ring were found damaged, and the piston rod seal was installed with nonstandard backup rings.

The airplane had another gear issue on August 9th, during which the nose gear was not shown down and locked. The first officer thought, the gear lever was not firmly in the down position, the gear was recycled, and all gear deployed properly. As the crew thought, it was due to the gear lever not in the down detent, there was no entry in the aircraft logs.

Boeing changed the abnormal gear checklists, the changes were incorporated into the Northwest procedures, Northwest emphasizing "five (5) gear light indications". Northwest released a bulletin to all 747-200 pilots reviewing the logic, operation and indications of the landing gear system

Good News and Bad News

After four years of faithfully compiling Aviation Human Factors News for jetBlue as their Human Factors Safety Officer, Roger has decided to retire. That is the good news for Roger but the bad news is he won’t be compiling the Aviation HF News.
The good news is that after a month’s well earned vacation Roger said that he might be able to put at least a monthly news together.
He will be assisting the FAA with some Safety work on their Faast team after his vacation.

I wish Roger all the very best in his future and thank him for sharing his work with us over all these years.
I will try to fill in the news when time allows but it won't be the quality of Roger's as this news your reading, illustrates.

May everyone have a Merry Christmas and a Safe, Healthy and Happy 2009

SAFETY INFORMATION NOTICE (SIN)

The following is a Safety notice issued by a company after the related incident
The company asked not to be identified but the information is useful for all of us that use a Maglite to inspect.

Distribution to all Safety Minded AMEs, AMTs and LAMEs as a courtesy by System Safety Services.
With thanks to David Edwards for allowing this to be released.
Feel free to distribute to anyone who would benefit from the information.

System Safety Services

SAFETY INFORMATION NOTICE (SIN)

Flashlight Hazard by Overheating

Background

Recently a MagLite 6V 2.5 AH rechargeable Flashlight was inadvertently left switched on and standing on its lens assembly. After a short period of time a burning plastic smell was detected and traced to the flashlight. The lens area of the flashlight had become overheated and scorched the vinyl bench-top. The incident highlighted a significant fire hazard; particularly had it gone unnoticed or occurred after hours.

Safety

Investigation revealed that a number of other flashlights have similar potential for overheating due to their high light output, magnifying lenses and switches which allow continuous operation.

Recommended Action

Applicable users of similar high light output flashlights are encouraged to consider preventative measures such as toolbox training, warning labels, spring loaded switches and/or safe modification to the lens assembly as appropriate to prevent upright storage.