



AIRCRAFT MECHANICS FRATERNAL ASSOCIATION

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Compliance Reminder: Is Safety Your Priority?

The crash of Continental Express Flight 2574, where missing screws on the horizontal stabilizer led to the disaster, was the most dramatic turning point for “safety culture” in the United States. The probable cause of this accident included “the failure of Continental Express management to establish a corporate culture which encouraged and enforced adherence to approved maintenance and quality assurance procedures.” They placed far too much emphasis on getting airplanes to take off on time than correctly following safety procedures. As a result of this and other similar aviation accidents, what we now know as “safety culture” came to the forefront. This movement for air safety continued with the enactment of the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century on April 5, 2000, which is also called AIR 21.

Our carriers have said time and again that their number one priority is safety – not profit, airplanes, or routes. They say it is the safety of our passengers and employees that they are concerned with. This is a bold statement, and it has been reemphasized very recently. AMFA has always agreed with that sentiment, and we want to confirm our commitment to safety by connecting the words of our carriers to real action on behalf of the flying public.

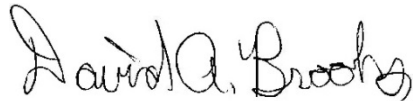
Safety is our number one priority, but how do we accomplish this? What can we do as Aircraft Maintenance Technicians (AMTs) to further safety in our field? First of all we need to be vigilant in thinking about how we are doing things, how others are doing things, and ultimately being safe. We have to be alert and make sure we are aware of our surroundings. Another thing we need to do is be more accountable. What does that mean? When it comes right down to it, we are accountable for our own actions, and everything that we do has a consequence. If you forget to lockout a system, go work on that system, and by doing so cause damage or injury, is it your fault? There are a lot of factors that are in play here, but in the end it could be your fault. Perhaps there are problems with procedures, training, or even the maintenance manual, but the bottom line is you are responsible for your actions. Another point is that we need to be informed by reading safety bulletins, maintenance manuals, and alerts that get posted to ensure the latest information is available to us.

We have to realize that we are all members on a safety team, and are accountable for safety, not just your safety representatives. If there is a puddle of oil on the floor, don't wait to tell the safety representative, as it is your job as well to clean up that spill. We need to be proactive and not reactive when it comes to items that could cause unsafe results. It is always your place to point out and rectify safety issues while on the floor or on the line, because that's what a safety team member does.

Another thing we need to consider is our culture. Culture is a word for people's “way of life,” meaning the way groups do things or how we think while performing our jobs. We cannot continue with our current culture and need to change it. I am not talking about the company culture, such as getting cookies at Christmas; I am talking about our work culture. One thing that is constant in our profession is change. We change shifts, aircraft types, and maintenance programs, and another thing that has to also change is our work culture.

SAFETY IN THE AIR BEGINS WITH QUALITY MAINTENANCE ON THE GROUND

It has been said by management that we do need to change our culture. With different programs and the extended maintenance packages, we do not need to rush and should rather take the proper precautions. With recent events including members being terminated, we need to make sure that the work is accomplished per our new program instructions, and use approved tooling to finish the tasks. We can no longer afford to follow the old culture of just getting it done by using belt loaders or other unapproved items to accomplish maintenance. We need to be cognizant of this change, and work accordingly. Safety needs to remain in the forefront of our minds as we work, and be our number one priority.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Brooks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David A. Brooks
National Safety & Standards Director