



Inspector Statement

On August 10, 2012 at 7:10 a.m. Inspector Nutt and I began an interview with Mr. Dave Esteves, Director of Maintenance for Avantair. The interview was conducted at Avantair's facility.

Mr. Esteves stated he received a call from Mr. Grogan about N146SL, which Mr. Grogan stated the elevator was gone. Mr. Esteves stated that Avantair had a conference call, about 7 or 8 people, to delegate duties. Mr. Esteves was supposed to contact the PMI. He also stated that during the conference call, Avantair decided to check all other aircraft elevators for tightness/correct installation. Mr. Esteves stated Mr. Grogan was at Avantair when the event happened, and that Mr. Grogan and Mr. Rues schedules at Avantair had been changed once again. Mr. Rue works Sun thru Thurs, and Mr. Grogan, Tues thru Saturday. Mr. Esteves stated the conference call was approximately ½ hour before he contacted me. He then stated he came to Avantair, and was at Avantair from approximately 1400 to 1700. He stated either Jim or Pat looked at maintenance records to determine the last maintenance that was performed on the left hand elevator. Mr. Esteves stated he would look at CMA maint. records for elevator work performed the previous day.

We asked Mr. Esteves if they grounded their fleet to inspect the elevators. He stated their biggest challenge were maintenance personnel/locations, so they tried to coordinate aircraft with locations. He confirmed no flights were interrupted. Mr. Esteves stated that Bill Allbright talked to the crew. He stated Anthony Mafretti was on duty in Maintenance Control (MTC). He stated the crew said that the aircraft felt funny on landing at Henderson and needed an unusual amount of backpressure and a different location of the yoke during landing.

Mr. Esteves stated that MTC initially had a difficult time getting a hold of their maintenance provider, Mr. Lefty Kenyon (his company name is Classic Challenger). Mr. Esteves stated they have used Mr. Kenyon on many occasions in the past. Mr. Esteves stated he spoke with Mr. Kenyon, who was dumbfounded regarding the missing elevator, although he couldn't remember if he called Mr. Kenyon or Mr. Kenyon called him. He stated Mr. Kenyon moved the aircraft in a hanger, although he didn't know who's hanger it was in. Mr. Esteves stated MTC told Mr. Kenyon to remove the center fairing (bullet). Mr. Esteves stated he told Mr. Kenyon to look at everything.

Mr. Esteves then stated that Mr. Kenyon sent pictures of the R/H elevator and hardware and said that the hardware might be loose. When we questioned him further about the hardware, he said maybe it wasn't pictures of the hardware. Then Mr. Esteves couldn't remember whether his phone call was on Saturday or Sunday. Then Mr. Esteves stated he couldn't remember if the bullet was removed on Saturday or Sunday, but he now thinks it was on Sunday. I asked him if he received the pictures by email, he stated yes, so I said lets go look at them in your office.

After arriving at Mr. Esteves's office, Mr. Jim Witkosky arrived, intervened and asked to see Mr. Esteves privately. Mr. Esteves followed Mr. Witkosky out of the room. After a few minutes, Mr. Esteves and Mr. Witkosky returned, with Mr. Witkosky watching Mr. Esteves every move. Mr. Esteves inserted a disc in his computer, and began to review the pictures. Mr. Witkosky stated these are the pictures they received by mail with the hardware (July 31) and he stated these pictures were not seen until yesterday. I informed Mr. Witkosky that Mr. Esteves stated he received pictures of the right hand elevator and elevator hardware the accident weekend and that those were the pictures we were searching for. Mr. Esteves provided the disc to me, which Mr. Witkosky asked me to provide him with a receipt showing we received the disc. Mr. Esteves began searching thru emails with Inspector Nutt and I looking over his shoulder. Mr. Witkosky objected, stating that there is private company information in emails and that we should not be looking over Mr. Esteves shoulder. Inspector Nutt stated that Mr. Esteves should have identified this to us and we would have moved. Inspector Nutt and I moved away from Mr. Esteves. Mr. Esteves continued to search, or wander, through emails. I had to remind Mr. Esteves two more times that we were requesting to see the pictures he received the accident weekend regarding the right hand elevator. Mr. Esteves identified six pictures, none showing the right hand elevator or hardware. Mr. Witkosky once again asked to speak to Mr. Esteves privately. After a couple of minutes, Mr. Esteves returned and we decided to continue our interview in another conference room. While walking to the conference room, Mr. Esteves stated he needed to prepare for an 8:30 meeting, so we decided to break and resume after their morning meeting.

Inspector Nutt and I conversed regarding our intent, and I contacted my Manager to brief her regarding our elevated conversations with Mr. Witkosky/Esteves.

When I ended my conversation with my Manager Ms. Cromie, I joined Mr. Esteves and Inspector Nutt in the hanger. Mr. Esteves requested that we continue this interview another time, since three airplanes were broke. Inspector Nutt asked about later in the afternoon, which Mr. Esteves stated no he will be busy all afternoon. Inspector Nutt stated maybe we can ask him some abbreviated questions, which I specifically asked Mr. Esteves if he was aware of the loose hardware on the right hand elevator on the accident weekend. Mr. Esteves now stated he does not recall. Mr. Esteves then stated that maybe you can put your questions in writing to me.


Mark V. Keefer
Aviation Safety Inspector
Tampa Flight Standards District Office


August 13, 2012



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Inspector Statement

On August 10th, 2012, at approximately 6:00 a.m. local time, FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector Mark Keefer and I met with Mr. Vi Luu (FAA A/P mechanic, certificate [REDACTED]) at Avantair Inc, Clearwater, Florida, facility. Mr. Patrick Grogan (Clearwater Maintenance Supervisor) was also present during the meeting.

We identified ourselves as FAA Inspectors and informed Mr. Luu that we were conducting an investigation in relationship to maintenance performed on aircraft N146SL, specifically to inspections/maintenance performed on the aircraft's elevator prior to July 27th, 2012.

Mr. Luu stated he has been a mechanic for 14 years; 10 years with West Coast, 2.5 years with Avantair and the last 3 to 4 months on the night shift. He recalled his training; PT6, Rockwell Collins, and Safety training.

Mr. Luu was shown maintenance records for N146SL, specifically his sign off's for the elevator inspections/maintenance. He stated he remembered replacing the hinge fittings. He also stated that the entire inspection takes approximately 70 hours to complete. He wasn't sure who else worked on the elevators for the AD compliance. He stated he removed the elevator. He stated that he always pulls all the hardware (nuts/bolts) on the vertical and horizontal elevator fittings. He stated that he replaces the nuts if needed.

Inspector Keefer showed Mr. Luu the maintenance record entry differences for replacing hinge fittings. Mr. Luu indicated he must have made a mistake on the entries (one entry identified he replaced hinge fittings and the other entry identified the hinge fittings were not replaced; Mr. Luu signed both entries). Inspector Keefer explained to Mr. Luu the responsibilities of signing maintenance entries with Mr. Luu's mechanics certificate number.

[REDACTED]
Robert J. Nutt
Principal Avionics Inspector
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Federal Aviation Administration
Tampa Flight Standards District Office
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Record of Conversation

Thursday, December 06, 2012
8:49 AM

Interview:	Kevin McKamey
Phone:	██████████
Location:	Phone Conversation

Narrative:

Mr McKamey said that they performed a fleet campaign and replaced all the elevator self locking nut hardware with new hardware, which resulted in replacing about 500 nuts.

They did check the running torque on the new nuts and found that 8 of the 500 new nuts did not meet the torque specs.

Van S. McKenny IV
Aerospace Engineer (Field)
Western Pacific Region