

Attachment 26. PMI Record of Conversation

DCA12MA020 Maintenance Factual Report



RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Kristi Dunks
Senior Air Safety Investigator

Date: January 17, 2012

Person Contacted: Mr. Charlie Bierman, FAA Principle Maintenance Inspector

Accident: DCA12MA020

Present:

Kristi Dunks, Maryam Allahyar- NTSB

Brook Lewis- FAA Chief Counsel

Tony James- FAA AVP-100

The Principle Maintenance Inspector (PMI) for Sundance Helicopters, Inc. was interviewed via telephone on January 17, 2012. The following is a summary of that discussion.

The PMI began airframe and powerplant school in 1974. He worked in general aviation for 10 years. In the late 1970s or early 1980s, he worked at a Part 145 repair station on Bell Helicopters for about 2-3 years. He then worked at Beechcraft as a technical representative for 18 years. In September of 1998, he was hired by the FAA. After undergoing two years of training, he began work as the PMI for tour operators in the Grand Canyon and several Part 145 operators. He has not had any Eurocopter or Turbomeca specific training in his work history, or while employed by the FAA. Due to his oversight of tour operators that operate Eurocopter helicopters, he has had experience with the Turbomeca technical representative reviewing the helicopter and learning the components. He also attended the two week course on rotorcraft accident investigation.

The PMI was initially assigned as the PMI in October 2011 when Jim Brownell was assigned from PMI to PAI. The PMI was recently changed to Acting Airworthiness Supervisor so he no longer oversees Sundance and Doug

Addington is the new PMI¹. The PMI had served as the PMI from 2007 to 2009, Alan McKinney became PMI from 2009 to 2010, James Brownell became PMI from 2010 to 2011, and Mr. Bierman was assigned PMI from October 2011-January 2012. In January of 2012, Alan McKinney was reassigned as the PMI. The PMI indicated that the FSDO manager does not like the inspectors to oversee the same operator for more than two years at a time. Additionally, acting supervisors are not assigned oversight responsibilities. He learned of his new assignment on January 10, 2012.

Prior to his assignment as acting Airworthiness Supervisor, the PMI's workload consists of two Part 135 operators, two Part 145 repair stations, several Part 91 operators, Grand Canyon Airlines, work with IAs and DARs, and various on-demand duties. The PMI described his workload as manageable, although he indicated that he always has the time and resources to complete the work he is required to. He currently works four, 10-hour shifts, and occasionally is required to work more than 40 hours.

For fiscal year 2012, the PMI reported the following R and P items for Sundance Helicopters and completion as of January 2012.

Table 1. R and P Items

	R-items	P-items	R-items complete	P-items complete
FY 2012	3	6	0	0

When the PMI was reassigned Sundance, he knew that the director of maintenance (DOM) had changed. He had a good working relationship with the previous DOM. He felt that Sundance was implementing changes including a QA department and new hangar facility that indicated their operations were going well. Although he had not had time to fully assess the company, he felt they were moving in the right direction. He visited the new hangar when they were first moving in and indicated that it looked like a nicer facility that they had previously worked in. He also said that he visited the hangar prior to the accident and spoke to the mechanics about the new space. Alan McKinney was also with him after completing work at Maverick Helicopters. He has not visited the facility since the accident. He looked at one helicopter but does not recall what day.

¹ Following the conference call, Douglas Addington was assigned as the new PMI.

The PMI was not aware of any enforcement actions, letters of investigation, or recent corrective actions. The LAS FSDO is planning an in-depth inspection following the accident.

The PMI was asked about Sundance's General Maintenance Manual (GMM). He indicated that when he took over as PMI, he was not sure what was going on with the GMM. Since there is no guidance for Part 135 9 or less operators, he was uncertain what to do with it. He spoke to the PAI and Mr. McKinney about it and they suggested to the operator that some of the information be incorporated into the General Operations Manual (GOM). He is uncertain whether or not the FAA will accept the manual into Sundance's program since there is no guidance to inspectors on it.