

Learning from experience #7

Door Emergency Assist Bottle Safety Pin Not Removed

The aircraft was undergoing an over-night hangar check; there was a requirement to change a main entry door slide. The AMM requires that the door assist air reservoir is made safe by deactivating the arming mechanism and this allows the use of two suitable bolts to be used for safety pins if the identified part number safety pins are not available. However, there is a stipulation that any safety pins fitted must have a red streamer attached to provide a positive identification that the mechanism is in safety mode.

The door assist air bottle was accessed via a panel located in the roof adjacent to the door entrance and as the correct part number safety pins were not available it was decided to use the alternative method of fitting bolts to safety the mechanism, however, once the bolts were fitted the access panel was closed to prevent any damage to the panel or injury to other people using the doorway to enter the aircraft.

The two technicians carrying out the slide raft change had assumed that they would complete the task and therefore knew all the precautions that were needed to be taken and like others, had completed the task a number of times before and were familiar with the requirements of the task in hand.

The slide change took longer than anticipated and the technicians who started the job had to hand the task of adjusting the girt bar fittings to the morning shift, the hand-over was not comprehensive however and the use of bolts fitted to the door assist air bottle was not documented. Also omitted was the use of red streamers attached to the bolts used for safety pins.

At the start of the morning shift the maintenance staffs were aware that the aircraft was required for service and that the slide change required completion. All checks on the slide girt bar were carried out satisfactorily and the slide air bottle safety pin was removed, however, no checks were made on the door emergency assist air bottle installation and the aircraft was declared serviceable for further flight.

The latent failure of the door emergency evacuation system was discovered sometime later when the aircraft underwent a heavy maintenance input.

A subsequent investigation identified that well intentioned procedures were not followed to adequately document the maintenance task; the AMM specified safety pins were not made available by the organisation, requiring the alternative workaround method to be used, but this had not been fully implemented due to the omission of streamers; the result was that working under time pressures to provide an aircraft for service a full system inspection had been overlooked, or assumptions made as to the aircrafts serviceability.