

Learning from experience #8

It Pays To Follow Instructions – Don't Assume!

After landing the flight crew reported that the brakes snatched when they were applied from LH pilot position and when taxiing onto stand, the aircraft stopped abnormally quickly as the brakes were applied again from the LH pilot position.

On initial investigation it was found that LH rudder pedal return springs were disconnected.

Subsequently it was identified that a night shift technician, not familiar with the removal of the rudder pedal installation, had been given the task to carry out the removal of these units.

The technician had just commenced carrying out the removal of the LH pilot pedal assembly using the correct data AMM reference chapter 27, when the supervisor checking to see if he was 'OK' with the task, found him removing the return springs in accordance with the AMM and acquainted him with a simpler 'alternative method' which did not require the springs to be disassembled. The technician then proceeded with the removal of the pedal unit as he had been instructed.

The investigation established that although the technician thought he had reconnected the subject springs before commencing removal of the rudder pedal assembly using the alternative method, he could not be 100% certain.

From this it was ascertained that the springs were not re-connected and because the removal of the LH & RH pedal assemblies was completed using the 'norm' alternative and unapproved method, engineers were not looking at the springs when re-installation of the pedals was undertaken.

This was despite the fact that the entry made on the task card stated the correct maintenance data reference AMM 27 for removal and refit, which included an entry for disconnecting the springs.

At the time, the engineers believed the entry that they made satisfied a company requirement to enter a data reference on the task card and was the most suitable for the task being carried out, although the individuals concerned consciously knew that those instructions had not been followed or complied with.

It was later established that a more appropriate entry would have been a data reference to the component maintenance manual (CMM 27) for the disassembly of the rudder pedals. Consequently, engineers who certified the maintenance task document were unaware of the disconnected springs.

This, combined with the assumption that suggested everyone knew how the pedals were 'always' removed using the alternative method, contrived to ensure that the disconnected set of springs became overlooked and not subsequently reconnected or inspected.