

Vendor Oversight Program

The vendor oversight program is a critical element in the carrier's quality assurance program, DOD Quality and Safety requirements, and a cornerstone of ensuring safe air transportation for our DOD passengers and cargo. A robust vendor oversight program will help identify deficiencies, enact improvements, and ensure components are repaired to the highest standards. It is the DOD's firm belief that this process, when accomplished on a regular and ongoing basis, significantly enhances safety and ultimately makes the carrier a better company.

The FAA has revised vendor surveillance requirements related to air carrier maintenance providers within Operations Specifications D091. The revised guidance no longer requires the air carrier to perform on-site visits of vendors not considered essential maintenance providers. D091 states: *"For nonessential maintenance providers, the certificate holder shall demonstrate, through an on-site audit or by some other means in accordance with 14 CFR §121.373(a), that the maintenance provider has an adequate organization, adequate facilities and equipment, competent personnel and is capable of performing the work that is consistent with the requirements of 14 CFR §121.367. The certificate holder shall make a determination that is based on a risk assessment of whether to accomplish an on-site audit of the maintenance provider. The risk assessment should take into account the aircraft part failure or system loss of function, and the consequence of the loss of function related to the work being accomplished by the maintenance provider."* As a result, some carriers send mail-out questionnaires in lieu of conducting on-site audits of those maintenance providers that perform repair and overhaul of major aircraft components. In some cases, we have seen companies remove these vendors from their "Approved Vendor List" altogether, while still utilizing those vendors and not providing continued oversight.

Bottom line, the DOD expectation is for carriers to continue to provide on-site oversight of those maintenance providers conducting repair and overhaul of major aircraft components (i.e. engines, landing gear, primary flight controls, emergency rafts and slides). The only exception is if they are OEM or OEM approved maintenance providers. The DOD doesn't feel

a mail-out questionnaire is sufficient oversight of these major component providers and requires a documented process that continually evaluates vendor performance. This process includes a method to schedule and track audits, follow-up discrepancies, analyze results to determine the root cause, and ensure comprehensive corrective actions are in place to prevent recurrence. The goal is to identify deficiencies before they cause an event.

Quality and Safety (Q&S) Requirements concerning vendor oversight can be downloaded from:
<http://www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Commercial-Services>

Other References:

FAA National Policy, “OpSpec D091, Requirements Air Carrier Maintenance Providers”