

## *Supplier/Distributor Oversight*

An area within maintenance quality assurance that generates discussion is what type of quality oversight a carrier should be providing over its parts suppliers/distributors. The quick answer is the same oversight a carrier provides over its repair and overhaul vendors. We have noted in past surveys that carriers take for granted that suppliers/distributors get their parts from reliable sources, and since 8130s accompany the parts, there is no further quality oversight required. The issue is not with new parts that come from manufactures or vendors who have parts manufacturer authority (PMA), but with repaired/overhauled parts that come from a supplier/distributor. A possible scenario is that a supplier/distributor could obtain a part from a repair/overhaul vendor (ROV) and provide it to a carrier, whereby, the carrier has not performed any type of surveillance on the ROV. Or worse, the carrier may have even removed that same ROV from their approved vendor list for cause. The DOD Quality and Safety Standard document simply states: *A system to evaluate contract vendors, suppliers, and their products is required.*

To meet the intent of this statement a carrier should: 1) Visit the distributor and review the distributor's quality control, part traceability, and personnel training procedures. 2) If on-site visits are not practical, a mail out checklist would be acceptable as long as it addresses the procedures already mentioned. This would place a requirement on the distributor to ensure only quality, airworthy parts are sold. The goal is to make sure parts are not being allowed to enter the airline industry from unapproved sources and that they are airworthy.

A third alternative, which was identified by a regional airline during a recent survey, is to utilize suppliers and distributors that are in compliance with FAA Advisor Circular (AC) 00-56A, Voluntary Industry Distributor Accreditation Program. This AC outlines criteria for suppliers and distributors of aircraft parts to be accredited by one of five FAA recognized accrediting organizations (a similar system to CASE). It identifies auditor qualification prerequisites, specific quality oversight requirements, and oversight

frequency. If your organization elects to utilize this AC as part of your oversight program, we would require a system to monitor the suppliers/distributors accreditations for currency. Maintaining a file with copies of the current accreditation certificates would suffice. Copies of this AC, as well as others, are available free of charge at <http://www.airweb.faa.gov/rgl>

Whatever system the carrier uses to evaluate their suppliers/distributors is strictly the carrier's decision. We evaluate the system chosen by the carrier to ensure that parts being installed on carrier's aircraft are procured from surveyed vendors.

Ensuring airworthiness of all parts being installed on aircraft is the objective of the DOD as it should be with every carrier. The ultimate responsibility of this falls on the carrier and is one of the overall goals of the company's evaluation system.