Maintenance manual currency

The DOD Quality and Safety Requirements state the following in regards to maintenance manuals, *"Company policy manuals and manufacturer's maintenance manuals are current, available, clear, complete, and adhered to by maintenance personnel. These manuals provide maintenance personnel with standardized procedures for maintaining company aircraft. Management policies, lines of authority, and company maintenance procedures are documented in company manuals and kept in a current status."*

Despite consistently highlighting these issues over the past several years, we continue to see trends with two specific manual currency issues:

1. The revision return-receipt system had inadequate documented procedures, or the company had adequate procedures but was not in compliance with them. In either case, the company was not in control of their revision return-receipt process.

    Here are some examples of just a few of the problems we have seen in the industry.

    > **Example 1**: Carrier X had a revision receipt system. The technical librarian tracked the receipts however; there was no written policy on what actions to take when manual holders failed to return the receipts within the required two-week time frame. As a result, some receipts were not returned; some overdue by up to two years. In this scenario, currency of the manuals was questionable.

    > **Example 2**: Carrier Y was unable to determine the currency of manufacturer's technical, and component maintenance manuals. The

company was not on the revision subscription service with the vendors, nor were they periodically checking the status of their manuals. Revisions of several component maintenance manuals in one shop did not agree with the master library copy and the librarian was not sure if manuals in the master library were even current.

Example 3: The technical librarian of Carrier Z tracked revision receipts and sent letters to manual holders indicating that publications were outdated. She continued to send these letters and make phone calls until it consumed much of her day. The company did not have a policy for the librarian to elevate her concerns to supervisors.

2. Although a company may have good control of their aircraft manufacturer's manuals, they may have no means to verify the current revision status of component maintenance manuals (CMM) with the manufacturers, resulting in the company's possession and use of out-of-date CMMs.

Regarding number one, publications managers must have a solid process to ensure successful distribution of manual revisions. They should have the authority to ensure successful implementation of this process, to include an effective escalation procedure to gain the attention of higher levels of supervision and possibly the option to pull manuals from service once their revision time limits have been exceeded. Proof/evidence of these processes is what we will want to see. Close the loop. Issue the revision, ensure it's posted, annotate it, and audit it.

The second item typically stems from a company's faithful reliance on the manufacturer's revision service (Subscription service). The problem here is things get lost, manufacturers get complacent, bought, etc. The simple fact is that with many smaller manufacturers, maintaining an effective revision distribution process may not be

economically possible. Whatever the reason, it is incumbent upon the air carrier to ensure the currency of the manuals that they use. Unless your aircraft manufacturer has begun to provide revision currency information on the CMMs, there's really only one way to deal with this problem, that is to check on a scheduled basis with the individual manufacturers themselves, by phone or by website, to ensure you have the most current revision. Yes, we understand the massive amount of CMMs out there, but we must require that those used for return to service be current.

We understand that tracking and maintaining the currency of large libraries can be very time consuming and labor intensive. A widely held belief is the more automated you make your system, the better off you are. An automated system is not mandated by the DOD, but is found to be beneficial to the carrier in the saving of time and money.

Strong policies and procedures incorporated into company manuals can also aid the overworked librarian. Revision control system procedures should identify personnel responsible for revision handling while setting time limits on revision receipts. Procedures should also address how delinquent receipts will be handled, and follow-up procedures should ensure revisions are being implemented correctly. A strong tie between your internal audit program and the technical library can aid in ensuring manual currency.