

# Aviation Human Factors Industry News

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From the sands of Kitty Hawk, the tradition lives on.

Hello all,

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## Midnight Shift Disaster 26 Years Ago

### First Convictions in 1984 Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster

Described as “too little, too late” and a “joke” by survivors and advocates, convictions were finally handed down in India related to the 1984 Union Carbide gas leak that killed approximately 15,000 people.

Eight former executives of the company’s Indian subsidiary were convicted of negligence and sentenced two years in prison and fined 100,000 rupees, or \$2,100.

Victims groups and activists wanted more serious penalties brought against the former executives, who at one point faced charges of culpable homicide until India’s Supreme Court reduced things to “death by negligence,” which is most often used in cases involving car accidents. Sati Nath Sarangi, an advocate for the victims, characterized the verdict as “the world’s worst industrial disaster reduced to a traffic accident.”

“This sentence is a joke on the people of Bhopal who waited 25 years for justice,” said Abdul Jabbar, a survivor of the catastrophe.

Indian authorities tried going after Union Carbide’s top official, Warren M. Anderson, following the accident, but Anderson fled the country and returned to the United States, refusing to face criminal charges.



## Landing gear mishap spurs NTSB recommendations for maintenance training

A retracted landing gear incident at Air Wisconsin Airlines has led the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to conclude [more on the job training](#) is necessary for mechanics performing certain tasks.

The Bombardier CRJ on 14 December 2008 landed in Philadelphia with its left main landing gear retracted, which caused damage to the aircraft's left wing, aileron and flap.

During its investigation NTSB determined the aircraft **underwent extensive maintenance** that included the removal, replacement and visual inspection of the left and right main landing gear uplock assemblies.

Work performed on the assemblies was identified as a **required inspection item (RII)**. NTSB's investigation revealed that the mechanic who replaced the left uplock assembly **had not** completed uplock assembly work previously, **received no** on the job training for the task and **was not** supervised during the procedure.



The left uplock assembly, upper attachment bolt, nut and cotter pin assembly used to mount the left main landing gear to the structure were installed, **but did not engage** the uplock assembly. As a result the uplock assembly pivoted about to the lower bolt. Since the upper attachment bolt didn't engage the uplock assembly, the left main landing gear remained in the up-and-locked position, and did not respond to pilot commands to lower prior to landing. NTSB concluded the incident mechanic **was not properly trained or supervised** during the procedure, and **the error was not detected** by a supervisor.

The board states **it is "concerned** FAA does not currently require mechanics to receive on the job training or be supervised while performing RII tasks for the first time".

NTSB's investigation revealed that **post maintenance inspections were not adequate** to detect mis-rigging of the uplock assembly. With the investigation complete NTSB has sent two recommendations to FAA. One is to require mechanics performing RII and other critical tasks receive on the job training or supervision when completing the task until the mechanic **shows proficiency** in that specific procedure. The second would require **RII inspectors** to receive supervision or on the job training on proper RII inspection until the individual demonstrates proficiency in completing inspections.

## Maintenance Worker At TIMCO Aviation Services Falls To His Death

TIMCO Aviation Services has lost a long time and valued employee in a tragic accident at its Greensboro, North Carolina facility two weeks ago. Guilford County Sheriff Department reported that the victim, age 41 while **working on a plane** at TIMCO Aviation Services **fell at a height of about two stories** and was pronounced dead at the scene. The sheriff's department would not say whether he was wearing safety equipment.



The individual had been with the company for **16 years** and was an honored veteran of Operation Desert Storm. Ron Utecht, CEO and President, said, "We are truly heart-broken at this terrible and devastating loss. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his immediate family and to all of his extended family and friends."

An investigation is currently underway **to determine the circumstances** that led to the tragedy. Details about the incident and about the employee are being withheld out of respect for the family and until the investigation is complete.

In 2008, there were **161 fatal** occupational injuries in North Carolina. **Twenty-two** of these deaths resulted from a fall.

## OSHA Publishes Proposed Rulemaking on Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention

The US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has published rulemaking that would require employers to **better protect workers from tripping, slipping and falling hazards** on walking and working surfaces.

“This proposal addresses workplace hazards that are a leading cause of **work-related injuries and deaths**,” says OSHA administrator Dr. David Michaels, adding that each year there are about **20 US fatalities and 3,500 serious injuries** related to slips, trips and falls. The noticed of proposed rulemaking describes revisions to the Walking-Working Surfaces and Personal Protective Equipment standards to help prevent such injuries.

Current walking-working surfaces regulations **allow** employers to provide outdated and dangerous fall protection equipment such as lanyards and body belts that can result in workers suffering greater injuries from falls.



## Pilot, mechanic killed in fiery helicopter crash in Ellis County (Texas)

Two CareFlite crew members were killed two weeks ago when their helicopter apparently lost its rotor, crashed and caught fire near Midlothian, authorities said.

The CareFlite helicopter apparently lost its rotor when it crashed near Midlothian on Wednesday, authorities said. The wreckage ignited a large grass fire.



The Bell 222 helicopter went down after taking off from its Grand Prairie hangar **for a post-maintenance test flight**, FAA spokesman Lynn Lunsford said. The National Transportation Safety Board and the FAA were investigating the crash site late Wednesday to determine a cause. Midlothian firefighters were in the area shortly after the 2:15 p.m. crash near U.S. Highway 67 and Wyatt Road in rural Ellis County. The wreckage ignited a large grass fire, officials said.

"We immediately started to extinguish the fire, but there were no survivors," said Midlothian Deputy Fire Chief Dale McCaskill. "The wreckage is pretty entangled." The rotor was about 100 yards from the wreckage, and the tail section of the aircraft was in a cluster of small mesquite trees about 250 yards away. McCaskill said there were no mayday calls before the helicopter went down in a ball of fire. "It was pretty spontaneous," McCaskill said. The crash site is about a quarter-mile west of U.S. 67 beyond heavy brush and a rusty fence. It's an industrial area near two gutted, abandoned buildings that once belonged to a tire refurbishing company. Firefighters had to cut through a gate to get to the site, officials said.

## **Pilot Claims Her Bell 47D1 Manual Contained Improper Instructions**

Yet another lawsuit has figured out how to circumvent the Product Liability reforms that were supposed to provide some sense of relief from legal actions against products with significant histories... like the Bell 47. And so, a lawsuit stemming from the 2005 crash of a Bell 47D1 in Rancho Murieta, CA can go forward, a California appeals court has ruled



Alika Rogers survived the crash of the 52-year-old helicopter when it went down. She claims that the **maintenance manual contained outdated instructions** for balancing the aircraft's tail rotor blades. Courthouse News Service reports that the last manual update had been in 1975. A trial court had initially agreed with Bell, who held that the manual is part of the aircraft and therefore cannot be used as evidence. But the 3rd Court of Appeal in Sacramento disagreed, saying that the manual was not part of the aircraft, and so was admissible.

In returning the case to trial court, Justice Ronald Robie wrote: "Federal regulations do not require a maintenance manual to be onboard the aircraft ... and unlike a flight manual that is unique to the aircraft, used by

the pilot, and necessary to operate the aircraft, a maintenance manual applies to different aircraft models, **is used by the mechanic**, and only for troubleshooting and repairing the aircraft."

Rogers is seeking (of course) unspecified damages from Bell.

FMI: [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/courtsofappeal/3rdDistrict](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/courtsofappeal/3rdDistrict),  
[www.bellhelicopter.com](http://www.bellhelicopter.com)

## **AMTSociety Announces 'Passing the Wrench' Program**

This toolbox **was donated** to Tarrant County College in Dallas. It was donated by a family of an AMT at American Airlines who recently passed away. The family wished for these tools to be used by those **who can use them when entering the profession**.

AMTSociety recently created a program called **"Passing the Wrench,"** a way to promote the profession of Aircraft Maintenance Technicians.



"Historically, AMTs have been known to assist their fellow colleagues and passionately promote their industry throughout their entire career," said Tom Hendershot, Executive Director, AMTSociety. "It's only natural to bring those two qualities together to honor late AMTSociety members. By **extending the life of their tools**, we are extending their contribution to the industry!"

The new program, "Passing the Wrench," enables a family of an AMT to donate a toolbox or tools after the AMT has passed away. These donated toolboxes and tools are then utilized by schools and students entering the profession. The program is structured so the donating family members and the recipients of the toolboxes and tools are able to remain in contact long after the donation has been made.

This enables the family to see the legacy living on through a new professional just entering the field. “Passing the Wrench” was developed **to continue to raise the standards** in Aircraft Maintenance and will continue to help others along the way.

AMTSociety is owned by Cygnus Expositions and is part of the Cygnus Aviation & Transportation Group, which includes Aviation Industry Expo and the leading industry publications Aircraft Maintenance Technology, Airport Business, and Ground Support Worldwide. Cygnus Expositions is a division of business-to-business media leader Cygnus Business Media.

## **FAA bill provision could affect U.S. maintenance jobs**

Members of Congress are urging House transportation leaders to preserve American jobs by accepting the Senate version of a **foreign repair station oversight provision** in the FAA reauthorization bill. As the House and Senate work to reconcile their FAA reauthorization bills, negotiators must address differences regarding a requirement for inspections of FAA-certificated foreign repair stations and drug and alcohol testing of foreign repair stations workers. The Senate version makes an exception if “a bilateral aviation safety agreement [is] in place that allows for comparable inspection by local authorities”—a provision that preserves the U.S.-E.U. Bilateral Aviation Safety Agreement (BASA). That agreement is critical for both aviation safety and jobs in the United States, 65 members of Congress told the chairmen and ranking members of the House Transportation Committee and its aviation subcommittee in a letter May 15.



“As you know, the BASA supports well-skilled, high-paying American jobs because **it allows U.S. repair stations to work on European aircraft and parts,**” the letter states.

“Without this agreement, some of the 1,200 E.U. certificated U.S. repair stations will lose their certifications while the others will face dramatically



higher certification costs, in both cases jeopardizing jobs dependent on the BASA.”

The BASA provides for cooperation in a variety of aviation areas, including [maintenance](#). With both commercial and general aviation operations depending on U.S. repair stations, the language is important to many sectors of the aviation industry.

## Delays in anti-pilot fatigue rules criticized

Lawmakers demanded last week that Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood write new rules aimed at [preventing pilot fatigue](#), as he promised to do last year after an airline crash near Buffalo, N.Y., killed 50 people. The top and Republican members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and its aviation subcommittee sent LaHood a letter [complaining](#) that new rules governing how many consecutive hours airlines can require pilots to work haven't been proposed by the Transportation Department. "Now is the time for DOT to fulfill its obligation to put forward new regulations," the lawmakers said. "The safety of the traveling public is paramount and we urge DOT to follow through on its commitment."



LaHood responded to the letter, saying: "[Safety is our number one priority](#) and addressing pilot fatigue is a crucial step toward making our skies safer. This rule is under review and we're working as quickly as possible to put forth a proposal." Last June, LaHood and Federal Aviation Administrator Randy Babbitt convened a special committee of airlines and pilots' unions to [draft new regulations](#) drawing on modern research on the causes and effects of fatigue.

The committee delivered its recommendations to the FAA in September. At that time, Babbitt said the FAA would draft its own proposal and formally publish it before the end of the year.

That deadline has been [moved back repeatedly](#). Information published online by the government indicates the FAA submitted a draft proposal to the Transportation Department for review in February. After that review is

complete, the draft still faces a review by the Office of Management and Budget. The FAA has set a new target date of Sept. 14 for publication of a proposed rule.

Even after it is published, it could be months or years before the proposed rule becomes final - **if ever**. The National Transportation Safety Board has been recommending for 20 years that the FAA update pilot flight and duty time rules. The FAA proposed new rules in the 1990s, but agency officials were unable to get airlines and pilots' unions to agree on the changes and they never were made final.

LaHood and Babbitt convened the fatigue committee in response to the crash of Continental Express Flight 3407 on Feb. 12, 2009. All 49 people on board and a man on the ground were killed. An NTSB investigation found that both pilots were likely **suffering from fatigue**, although fatigue wasn't a direct cause of the accident. Pilot and air traffic controller fatigue has been cited as a factor in several other airline accidents over the past decade. Federal law requires the FAA to prove that the cost to the airline industry of new rules would be justified by lives saved.