



Safety Information Bulletin

Airworthiness

SIB No.: 2017-17R1

Issued: 24 January 2018

Subject: Kobe Steel Ltd Material – Falsified Inspection Data

Ref. Publications:

Press Releases by Kobe Steel Ltd, dated [08 October 2017](#) and [13 October 2017](#) on non-conforming materials.

Applicability:

Design, production and repair approval holders of certified products (see Note 1 of this SIB), parts or appliances, and components thereof, using materials supplied by Kobe Steel.

Note 1: Products are aircraft, engines and propellers. Kobe Steel Ltd material used in products, parts and appliances, and components thereof are hereafter referred to as 'affected parts' in this SIB.

Description:

As reported in recent media articles, Kobe Steel Ltd, a Japanese metals producer, found that their workers have, possibly over a period of many years, fabricated the inspection data on certain parts and shipped those parts, possibly not meeting the customer's specification, to a wide range of companies manufacturing a wide range of products, parts and appliances, and components thereof.

The Japanese Authorities, including the Japan Civil Aviation Bureau (JCAB), are investigating the matter in order to establish the scope and extent of the problem, regarding affected parts and customers impacted and the extent of any deviations from specifications. Several affected organisations have already been informed and have indicated they will evaluate the concern, following the normal procedures for ensuring continued airworthiness.

Since EASA SIB 2017-17 was issued, EASA was informed that Kobe Steel Ltd contacted the potentially affected customers and provides them with the necessary information. The technical investigation is still in progress and the partial results available to date allow to extend and clarify the recommendations provided by this SIB. This SIB is revised accordingly.

Regulatory References:

Regulation (EC) [216/2008](#), Annex I, paragraph 1.a, Structures and materials, states that 'the integrity of the structure must be ensured throughout, and sufficiently beyond, the operational envelope for the aircraft, including its propulsion system, and maintained for the operational life

This is information only. Recommendations are not mandatory.



of the aircraft.’ Regulation (EU) [748/2012](#), Part 21.A.31, Type design, paragraph (a) 2., states that the type design shall consist of ‘information on materials and processes and on methods of manufacture and assembly of the product necessary to ensure the conformity of the product.’ Article 4(4) of Regulation (EU) [376/2014](#) tasks the Agency with the establishment of a mandatory reporting system. Regulation (EU) [2015/1018](#) specifies that one of the occurrences which are subject to reporting is ‘the use of products, components or materials, from unknown, suspect origin, or unserviceable critical components’ – suspected unapproved parts (SUP).

At this time, the safety concern described in this SIB is not considered to be an unsafe condition that would warrant Airworthiness Directive (AD) action under Regulation (EU) [748/2012](#), Part 21.A.3B.

Recommendation(s):

Until further information becomes available, allowing refinement of the scope of the problem and determination of its potential significance to safety, EASA makes the following recommendations:

- All organisations that may have specified or used Kobe Steel products should do a thorough review of their supply chains in order to identify if, and when, Kobe Steel products have been used in their product designs and fabrications.

Note 2: At this time, no definitive timescale has been identified during which this problem has existed, so current production should be prioritised.

- In addition to informing their customers, production and repair approval holders are advised to inform their competent authorities of the use of such materials, if not already known by the competent authority.
- Design approval holders are advised to establish the scope of use of affected parts in its products, paying particular attention to identifying such material usage in more critical applications, e.g. Primary Structure, Principal Structural Elements, Critical Parts and Systems. Where alternative suppliers are available, it is recommended to suspend use of Kobe Steel products unless the potential impact of those Kobe Steel products on airworthiness of these affected parts or repairs can be excluded.
- Design approval holders which have (at the time of issuance of this revised SIB) not yet been contacted by Kobe Steel Ltd, but which have any reason to doubt the quality of material manufactured by Kobe Steel Ltd, e.g. following internal quality checks in the design, production, or repair process, etc, should contact Kobe Steel Ltd for clarification and to obtain all the information necessary to ensure the airworthiness of design solutions under their responsibility.
- Production or repair approval holders which have identified that Kobe Steel materials have been used in their parts or repairs, but which have (at the time of issuance of this revised SIB) not yet been contacted by the responsible design approval holders, should contact the applicable design approval holder(s) to obtain further guidance to reduce the possible impact of use of material(s) with unconfirmed quality.

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- Design approval holders affected by the quality issue of materials produced by Kobe Steel Ltd are recommended to establish the significance of the impact of using material(s) of unconfirmed quality on the airworthiness of their parts and/or repairs and propose the appropriate corrective actions to EASA using existing design, production, or continued airworthiness interfaces/channels, as appropriate.

Contact(s):

For further information, or to submit reports of finding affected parts, contact the EASA Safety Investigation and Reporting Section, Safety Management Directorate:

E-mail: IORS@easa.europa.eu.

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