



EASA

PAD 10-010 WITHDRAWAL STATEMENT

EASA issued Proposed Airworthiness Directive (PAD) 10-010 because some maintenance organisations performed maintenance of safety belts / torso restraint systems without providing the necessary justifications to demonstrate that the maintained safety belts and restraint systems would comply with the applicable airworthiness requirements.

However, in accordance with Part 21A.3B(b)1, "*The Agency shall issue an airworthiness directive when an unsafe condition has been determined by the Agency to exist in an aircraft, as a result of a deficiency in the aircraft, or an engine, propeller, part or appliance installed on this aircraft.*" Even though improper maintenance of safety belts and torso restraint systems could result in inadequate retention capability or different material behaviour (elongation), EASA lacks sufficient evidence of an unsafe condition. In addition the maintenance of safety belts / torso restraint systems without using applicable maintenance data does not provide, by itself, enough evidence of an unsafe condition that would warrant the issuance of an airworthiness directive (AD). Therefore no AD will be published, and this issue is addressed by a Safety Information Bulletin (SIB) which highlights the illegal nature of such maintenance.

Background information:

According to Part 145.A.45 the organisation maintaining a component shall hold and use applicable current maintenance data in the performance of maintenance including modifications and repairs. Maintenance data include the applicable instructions for continuing airworthiness, issued by type certificate holders, supplemental type certificate holders and any other organisation required to publish such data in accordance with Part 21. For safety belts / torso restraint systems the applicable maintenance data is included in the Component Maintenance Manual (CMM) provided by the design approval holder. The CMM may contain limitations to certain maintenance and repair tasks. When present, such limitations cannot be regarded as absence of applicable maintenance data. At the same time, production drawings cannot be considered as maintenance data, unless indicated as such by the Design Approval holder.

According to the inspections performed by the Agency, the German Part 145 maintenance organisations quoted in PAD 10-010 did not comply with the CMM and did not hold other applicable maintenance data. Therefore safety belts and torso restraint systems maintained by them are regarded as non-airworthy, thus potentially unsafe and the release certificates (EASA Form 1) issued by these organisations are considered invalid.

In accordance with subsequent information received, EASA is continuously investigating this situation further, since there could be other Part 145 maintenance organisations in and outside Europe in the same position.

With regards to 'applicable maintenance data', the Agency has no evidence of the specific approval of maintenance data for this purpose, issued before 28 September 2003 (date of entry into force of Part 21) by any National Aviation Authority (NAA), which could be considered valid in accordance with EC Regulation No. 1702/2003 Article 2b. Additionally, maintenance procedures approved by NAAs before 28 November 2003 (date of entry into force of Part 145) cannot be used after that date if not in compliance with the EU rules, taking into consideration that Part 145.A.45(b)(4) differs, in this respect, from JAR 145.45(b)(5) and does not allow the continuation of NAAs to approve standard practices as maintenance data. According to Part 145, only the Agency can approve alternative applicable maintenance data from those provided by the design approval holders.

In the particular case of safety belts and torso restraint systems, the replacement of the webbing being done not in accordance with applicable maintenance data shall be considered as a design change, and more specifically as a repair.

In accordance with Part 21A.611, such a design change of equipment certificated in compliance with an ETSO can only be performed by the ETSO holder, in case of Minor Change, or approved through a new ETSO certification and re-identified by means of new Part Numbers in all other cases.

In alternative to the above, the repair approval can also be achieved by any legal person or entity (including maintenance organisations) through EASA in accordance with Part 21, by issuance of a Minor Change at aircraft level for safety belts and restraint systems on statically tested seats. The repair approval for safety belts and restraint systems to be installed on dynamically tested seats could only be performed through a Major Change process, requiring an STC when the applicant is different from the aircraft TC Holder. In all cases, the approval shall involve the definition of a new Part Number and instructions for Continuing Airworthiness.

Further information:

EASA is continuously investigating this situation further and will issue updates when appropriate.

Conclusion:

For the above mentioned reasons, PAD 10-010 is hereby withdrawn and is replaced by Safety Information Bulletin 2010-15 which highlights the illegal nature of such maintenance.

The SIB is posted on the Agency AD website at <http://ad.easa.europa.eu> .

Cologne, 12 April 2010