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24 January 2000

RB00-Special

Customer Name
Street Address
City, State & Zip

Subject: Serial Number _____

Reference: a.) Pending AD

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS (OVERNIGHT)

Dear:

As a valued Mooney Customer, we feel it is important to keep you informed of the latest happenings at the factory in Kerrville. As this industry is a relatively small one, you may have heard rumors concerning a forthcoming Airworthiness Directive (AD) that will be issued against a handful of newer Mooney aircraft. Unfortunately, we must inform you that your aircraft is included in this group of airplanes. Fortunately though, this AD will have no short or long-term impact to you or your aircraft. While this is certainly not exciting news, we believe it is in your best interest to know the facts surrounding the AD sooner rather than later.

There is NO safety-of-flight concern, now or ever! To date, we can confirm the following facts surrounding the AD, why it will be issued, and why it is truly a 'non-event':

- 1) Just days before Christmas, Mooney, through its routine *quality* initiatives, discovered that one of its newer drilling/riveting machines (called a "DriveMatic") was producing certain parts that were not in compliance with our original design drawings.
- 2) In short, the DriveMatic machine was 'chamfering' holes it shouldn't have been. This simply means that some additional material (thousandths of an inch) was removed during the drilling process prior to rivet installation—essentially rounding out the edges of a drilled hole.
- 3) The number of 'suspect' parts/assemblies has been narrowed to a small number: only 22 total. Bear in mind that this is out of a total of almost 8,000 in any given airplane.
- 4) Of these 22 different parts/assemblies there were multiple lots produced and not every lot is affected. Therefore, not every part in every airplane is affected; only a visual inspection will confirm if the given part is conforming or not.
- 5) Of the over 7,500 Mooneys flying worldwide, only 48 will be affected by this AD (their serial numbers are: Bravos 27-0273 through 27-0282, Ovations 29-0189 through 29-0209 and Eagles 30-0026 through 20-0042). No other aircraft are affected.
- 6) The discrepancies are so insignificant that these 'non-conforming' parts are just as strong as 'conforming' parts. With the FAA present a few weeks ago, Mooney pull-tested some of

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the 'non-conforming' parts and they exceeded their design criteria by over 50%. The reality is that these parts are just fine. However, under FAA guidelines we are not allowed to have parts in the aircraft that do not 'conform' to the original design drawings. Therefore, the following actions will be taken regarding the 48 aircraft:

- i) The FAA sometime this year will issue an AD that will require an inspection of these aircraft. In the interim, Mooney, per standard operating procedures, will issue Service Bulletin (SB# M20-273) for preliminary *field* inspections. A copy of this will be forwarded when issued later in first quarter. Please remember that compliance with this SB is voluntary and will be the responsibility of the aircraft owner. No action is required with the SB; however, the AD, when issued, will require mandatory action.
- ii) The AD will likely have a two-year compliance timeframe.
- iii) Per the AD, Mooney will complete final inspections and repairs (if necessary) of all aircraft here at the factory.
- iv) Essentially the inspection will require determining/verifying that a given part is a conforming part. If it is not, then Mooney (per the approved FAA repair) will actually 'shoot' additional rivets (between the existing rivets) on the given part/assembly to add extra strength. *By doing this, the repaired part/assembly will actually be up to 30% stronger than the same part in an unaffected aircraft.*

After reading this, a question that probably comes to mind is: "How long will it take to inspect my aircraft?" Being conservative, we estimate that it will take about two (2) weeks. Mooney will cover all costs directly related to the AD including coordinating getting the aircraft to/from the factory for the inspection. Scheduling and cycling the 48 aircraft through the factory will probably occur at a rate of approximately four planes a month and will not begin until sometime after the AD's issuance. Mooney will likely schedule your aircraft at the time of its annual inspection, to have both the AD and annual inspections occur simultaneously. Further details concerning the mechanics of how everything should occur will be disseminated after the AD is issued.

In this FedEx package, you will find a sample cutaway coupon that has one 'conforming' hole with a rivet installed alongside a 'non-conforming' (chamfered) hole. When you compare the two, you'll see firsthand just how insignificant this issue really is. Nonetheless, should you have any further questions, please contact me directly at 830-792-2983 or rbelow@mooney.com. In the meantime, we will keep you abreast of any new information on this topic until such time that we contact you later this year after the FAA has formally issued the AD.

Sincerely,

Ron Below
Director of Product Services