



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

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REGULAR MAIL & CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED
Cert. Mail Receipt Nos.

March 23, 2015

Mr. Matthew Chaffin
Vice President, Quality Assurance
Beechcraft Corporation, Plant 4/E01
10511 E. Central
Wichita, Kansas 67206-2557

Re: Civil Penalty Letter - EIR No. 2013CE430027

Mr. Chaffin,

Based on the referenced investigative report it appears that:

1. Beechcraft Corporation, (BC) is, and at all times mentioned below, was the holder of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Production Certificate Number 8, authorizing the production of airplanes and related parts.
2. Between January 2012 and November 2013, BC applied for and was issued airworthiness certificates for 43 Baron aircraft (Aircraft).
3. Incident to being issued the above certificates, BC received Field Condition Reports (FCRs) claiming the above noted Aircraft suffered fuel leaks.
4. A BC and FAA investigation into the above noted FCRs revealed that:
 - a. The leaks were caused by the Aircraft's fuel bladder;
 - b. The fuel bladder leaked due to one or more of the following production errors:
 - i. The interconnect nipple base was not located against the spar causing excessive force against nipple reinforcement under fuel load. This error was not detected during inspection.
 - ii. Installation of dimensionally non-conforming bladders from BC approved supplier, Floats and Fuel Cells, Inc.
 - iii. Installation errors resulted in excess material. Excess material may result in unsupported bladder material at a seam. In the presence of fuel loading, bladder seam deformation may result in a compromise of the inner liner, resulting in a leak path between the inner liner and the vapor barrier layer.

- iv. Use of an unauthorized tool causing damage to the interior surface of the nipple during the installation process and propagated through to the exterior surface resulting in a leak.
 - v. Inadequate compliance to inspection processes; and
 - vi. Lack of production training.
5. The discrepancies noted in paragraph 4(b) above:
- a. Were out of compliance with the data and procedures approved for BC's production certificate; and
 - b. Caused the Aircraft to be nonconforming to its approved design and not in a condition for safe operation at the time they were presented to the FAA for airworthiness certification, as noted in paragraph 2 above.
6. By reason of the foregoing facts and circumstances, BC violated the following sections of the Federal Aviation Regulations (Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations):
- a. 21.146(b) which provides that the holder of a production certificate must maintain the quality system in compliance with the data and procedures approved for the production certificate.
 - b. 21.146(c) which provides that the holder of a production certificate must ensure that each completed product or article for which a production certificate has been issued, including primary category aircraft assembled under a production certificate by another person from a kit provided by the holder of the production certificate, presented for airworthiness certification or approval conforms to its approved design and is in a condition for safe operation;

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. § 46301, BC is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed \$25,000 for each violation of the regulations. After reviewing our investigative file, we would be willing to accept \$430,000 in settlement of this matter. Enclosed with this letter is a copy of the settlement procedure.

In order to give BC an opportunity to submit the suggested amount in settlement or additional information concerning the alleged violations, we will not take any further action in this matter for a period of thirty (30) days after Beechcraft Corporation's receipt of this letter.

A. Lester Haizlip
Regional Counsel
By:

David B. Kessler
Directorate Counsel

Enclosures:

ACE-180/Wichita MIDO (Rainey)

ACE-7:DBKessler:x3763:ag:5/17/13:civpen/Beechcraft