

WORK ZONE

REDUCING MISHAPS BY 50%

Mishap Flotsam and Jetsam

Tidbits of Gouge From the Safety Center Investigators

By Dave Clark

After participating in nearly 40 Class A and B mishap investigations the last couple years, the Safety Center investigators remain impressed with the overall performance of aircraft mishap boards (AMBs), and we see no problem in the overall AMB structure, training or investigative process. But, during the investigations, we have seen simple blunders that not only were embarrassing, they actually hampered the process.

Accessing the dustbins of our brains, where we've stashed these observations, we want to share these tidbits so ASOs and AMBs do not repeat them.

- Avoid the temptation to cut and paste addressees from the mishap data report (MDR) to the safety investigation report (SIR)—the recipients are different. Invariably, those who need to get the SIR will not get it, and those who don't have a need will get it. Look to OPNAV 3750.6R, appendixes 5A and 5B, for MDR addressees and appendixes 7A and 7B for SIRs.

- Too many amended MDRs have been sent with "Initial MDR" still in the subject line. Embarrassing? Yes. Proofreading the message is the key here.

- The EI clearinghouse at the appropriate naval air depot (NADEP) coordinates engineering investigation (EI) exhibit shipping. Don't let your shipment be delayed unnecessarily while the base logistic organization awaits the low bid; time is wasted. Contact the clearinghouse representative after submitting the EI request, to coordinate shipping. Contacts can be found at the NavAir Naval Aviation Maintenance Discrepancy Reporting Program (NAMDRP) clearinghouse site at: <http://www.namdrp.navair.navy.mil>

- We occasionally receive incorrectly formatted SIRs. That's easy enough to fix by following OPNAV 3750.6R, Chapter 7.

- When preparing for the salvage of your mishap aircraft, remember to bring tri-walls and pallets; they give you a place to put the smaller parts and pieces, rather than leaving them piled and strewn about the deck. Debarkation will be quicker and cleaner, and, after a week or so on a salvage vessel, you'll be glad you were organized better.

- We often notice a hesitancy to submit hazreps during the course of an investigation. What greater service can there be to the fleet by an AMB than to inform and prevent? Send 'em! It is your responsibility as an AMB. Hazrep guidance is provided in 3750.6.

- Flight data recorders (FDRs) and cockpit voice recorders (CVRs) are valuable to any investigation. If your aircraft is intact after an event, and you need the data from the device, remove or disconnect the power plugs before applying any electrical power to the aircraft. Electrical power applied to an installed and connected recorder will overwrite critical data. If there are any questions on recorders, contact our FDR guru, Mr. Chip Brown, at (757) 444-3520, ext 7242 (DSN prefix 564)

- More on FDRs and CVRs. Did you know AFC-258 installed voice and data recorders (VADRs) during depot maintenance in FA-18 lot 10-13 Charlie models, BuNo 163427 – 164279? Some squadrons are not aware of this change. Know what nonvolatile data recorders are installed in your aircraft, what they look like, and where they are located. Check your aircraft history for AFC-258.

AMBs without a Safety Center investigator on site rarely attend the suspect component EI. Don't just send off the component and wait—participate in your EI. The face-to-face interaction with the engineers and fleet support team (FST) is invaluable in understanding the failure, and you'll be able to decipher the final EI report. The added benefit is that your presence expedites the process.

Sometimes we hear about senior members and ASOs being reluctant to ask for a Naval Safety Center mishap investigator. Investigation support is at the top of our budget priorities; we will assist on site if requested.

Visit the Naval Safety Center mishap investigator website at: <http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil/aviation/investigations>. 

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