

Hazreps

Hazreps Can Happen to You

By Ltjg. Brett Carstens

We all know the standard training-day routine is not complete without hazard-report (hazrep) debriefs. As you head into the discussion, invariably you think, “What am I going to learn from another hazrep? This never will happen to me.” VP-46 recently had a situation where hazrep debriefs prevented us from taking an aircraft flying with a potentially dangerous malfunction

The P-3 community has had two recent incidents where windshield-heat capacitors failed and leaked oil onto electrical circuits, causing cabin fires in flight. In one case, the aircrew isolated the affected equipment, pulled the circuit breakers, and continued the flight. In the other case, the crew couldn’t isolate the affected equipment. They stabilized the situation by systematically shutting down buses in accordance with the fire-of-unknown-origin checklist. But, when they reenergized the equipment in preparation for landing, the fire reflashed. They landed and emergency evacuated the aircraft. The postflight inspection revealed a windshield capacitor had overloaded, spraying oil over other electrical components, causing smoke in the cabin.

The hazreps stemming from these incidents were briefed to all VP-46 aircrew and maintenance personnel.

Soon afterward, a maintainer was working in the forward electrical-load center, where the capacitors are located. He found residual oil on a component, and armed with knowledge of the hazreps, he investigated

the source. He found the windshield-heat capacitors were spraying oil, the same situation that had caused the earlier fires. The capacitors were removed and replaced. His action most likely prevented an in-flight fire.

Until this incident, hazreps had not played such an obvious role in our squadron’s safety posture. Knowledge of the previous two hazreps was instrumental in this case. Also, the affected capacitors were retained for analysis of failure modes. We published another hazrep to help document the trend.

This hazrep was analyzed by NAVAIR, and replacement capacitors are on order. An aircraft bulletin detailing this deficiency and mitigation efforts is forthcoming. I now look forward to hazrep training every week; it just may prevent a mishap. 🇺🇸

Ltjg. Carstens flies with VP-46.

This article reinforces the utility and necessity of a robust hazrep program, especially in a community of aging aircraft. How many trends such as the one discussed here have yet to be discovered because the unit did not deem something significant or important enough to submit a hazrep? Worse yet, what malfunctions or emergencies have become so routine that a unit forgoes reporting altogether? This squadron took that necessary step and went further by incorporating hazrep discussions into its training regimen, potentially averting a much more serious incident.—LCdr. Paul Wilson, analyst, Naval Safety Center.