



International Aviation Safety Association

## January 2001 Newsletter

Inside

IASA Symposium:

Summary of Proceedings 2

Changes at the DOT 3

Contact IASA 3



*Aviation Safety is a Global Matter  
And so is IASA*

## Chairman's Note

For IASA, the year 2000 represented a watershed. The attitudes and institutions that had thwarted constructive dialogue within the aviation safety community were challenged when the White House declared that aircraft wiring was an "issue of national concern".

But, that is not the end of the story and IASA will continue to focus the attention

of all those concerned with aviation safety in not only recognizing the problem but in taking direct action to remove the problem by whatever means are available.

After all, if measures cannot be introduced that curtail the known problems - the fleets can always be grounded. A drastic step? Yes, but it would solve the problem.

## Airline Mergers: What about the Passengers?

The announcement that AMR, parent of American Airlines would spend \$1.7 billion to buy Trans World Airlines (TWA) and some assets of UAL's United Airlines, in deals to give it a quarter of the U.S. air travel market received a "cautionary" welcome from the International Aviation Safety Association.

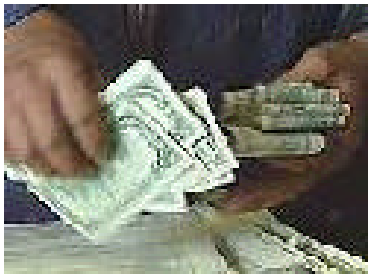
IASA USA Vice-Chairman, Edward B Block, a world recognized aircraft wire and cable expert, urged the airlines to make public the type of aircraft wiring used in their fleets and specifically those wired with "Kapton".

Kapton is a wiring insulation trademarked by DuPont and the name commonly used by experts to describe any aromatic polyimide wire. Studies have shown that a crack exposing a Kapton wire's conductor can lead to a more severe reaction when it short-

circuits than other types of wire. The continued use of Kapton insulated wire was banned by the US Navy in 1987 - and is no longer used in military aircraft in the United States and Australia. In 1999, the entire space shuttle fleet was grounded due to problems experienced with wiring on its spacecraft. The wiring in question - Kapton.

"With the airline mergers we are reading about on a daily basis, it is the appropriate time for the airlines to let the public know what wires surround them when they board an aircraft" continued Block "in this way the passenger can make an informed decision whether to board that aircraft or not"

All we can do now is wait and see whether the airlines concerned will make this information available.





*IASA USA Vice-Chairman  
Ed Block set the stage.*



*"The notion that a single human life can be hidden within a cost-benefit analysis approach to aviation safety is repugnant; not only to IASA but the majority of those that IASA comes into contact with."*

*IASA Chairman  
Lyn S Romanc*



## IASA Symposium: Summary of Proceedings

We posed a question - is Aircraft Wiring Cause for Concern and the answer that resonated throughout both days of the Symposium was an unequivocal Yes! The mere recognition of the safety hazards posed by aircraft wiring is an achievement in itself, after all there was a time when the governing thoughts on this particular subject was "Fit and Forget" or "Wire is Wire".

Those attending heard from a range of speakers give their analysis of aircraft wiring from a variety of different perspectives. Some of those that presented are as follows:

- ❖ **Ed Block IASA USA VICE CHAIRMAN** Opened the Symposium on both days and set the stage for what became an information-filled two days. Ed opened his presentation with a series of video clips depicting some of the public comments made by the FAA's Elizabeth Erickson and Tom McSweeney. With that as his starting point Ed detailed the wiring problem from both a military and civilian perspective - drawing on a library of documents that added impetus to his core message "We have a Big problem".
- ❖ **Charles Huettner** (the President's Senior Aviation Policy Advisor) thanked IASA for bringing to the White House's attention what is now regarded as "an issue of national concern". In fact, the Symposium became the venue for the first public announcement of the Report by the Wire System Safety Interagency Working Group (WSSIWG) entitled "Review of Federal Programs for Wire System Safety".
- ❖ **John Delisi** (Chief of Aviation Engineering Division of the National Transportation Safety Board) & **Nick Stoss** (Acting Director, Investigations (Air) Transportation Safety Board of Canada) gave a joint presentation that addressed amongst other things the findings into the TWA 800 disaster of July 17, 1996 and an in-depth look at current investigation procedures.
- ❖ **Jim Shaw** (Manager, Inflight Fire Project, Air Line Pilots Association) gave a presentation from the pilots' perspective. He spoke of ALPA research of the Service Difficulty Report database that concluded that the database under-recorded significant events, that there were at least three "smoke" events per day and that in one instance they found only 21 events were listed in the database compared to 155 that should have been.
- ❖ **Armin Bruning** (Lectromechanical Design Co) addressed aircraft wiring from a "scientific" perspective taking the audience through the history and mechanics of the associated problems.
- ❖ **Klaus Koplín** (Secretary-General European Joint Aviation Authorities) gave a comprehensive outline of current European strategies including the Joint Strategy Safety Initiative that uses analysis on both a historic and future basis.

A video will be available for distribution containing highlights of the symposium together with a CD-ROM of the presentations that were made in Power Point. The video will include two extra presentations that due to time restrictions could not be presented at the Symposium. The presentations are by **Mike Murphy** (Chairman of the Air Passenger Safety Group) and IASA's Database Specialist **John King**. To request your copy send your request to [all4dad@bestweb.net](mailto:all4dad@bestweb.net) including your full mailing address.

## Norman Y Minetta Appointed Transport Secretary

The International Aviation Safety Association ("IASA") welcomes the appointment of Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta.

IASA has worked closely with the Clinton administration in focusing attention on aging wire issues in commercial aircraft culminating in the formation of the Wire System Safety Interagency Working Group ("WSSIWG"). IASA looks forward to progressing this and other safety related issues with the incoming administration and Mr. Mineta.

The safety of the flying public is a matter that transcends politics and this is reflected in the bipartisan nature of the appointment of Mr. Mineta.

IASA is optimistic that aging wire in commercial aircraft will remain an issue of "national concern" that will be debated in an open forum taking into account the views of all those concerned with aviation safety.



January 24,  
2001

IASA will be meeting with the Secretary-General of the Joint Aviation Authorities in Holland among other meetings in Europe during January 2001.

January 26,  
2001

IASA USA Vice-Chairman Ed Block and Database Specialist John King will address the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association meeting at Romulus, MI.

### How to Contact IASA

IASA welcomes the views of all those concerned with aviation safety and encourages your feedback.

By Email: [iasa.pr@virgin.net](mailto:iasa.pr@virgin.net)

Website: [www.iasa.com.au](http://www.iasa.com.au)

By Post: PO Box 721  
Goldens Bridge  
New York 10526 USA



IASA

Global Aviation Safety

*Our Wings Encompass All*