

2009/13

Applicability: Owners/Operators, their associated Maintenance Companies, Production Organisations

CONTAMINATED HALON SUPPLIES

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The CAA has become aware that quantities of Halon 1211 and 1301 used in aircraft fire suppression equipment may not meet specification. This Halon has entered the supply chain and operator's/owner's aircraft may be affected.
- 1.2 The purpose of this AIRCOM is to inform operators/owners that the CAA is working with the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) to determine if any potential safety consequences may arise from this non-compliance.
- 1.3 At this time, the CAA has no information to indicate that an unacceptable risk to safety exists, and therefore this AIRCOM is advance information, for planning and scheduling purposes only.

2 Background

- 2.1 Halon 1211 is used in the portable fire extinguishers found in aircraft cabins, while Halon 1301 is used in engine and cargo hold extinguisher systems. Four UK companies could have been supplied with bulk Halon that may not meet specification; AVIA Technique Ltd, Pacific Scientific, Fire Fighting Enterprises Ltd and MEL Aviation Ltd. These companies in turn, are known to have supplied Halon to other production, maintenance and supplier organisations. The suspect Halon batches and the extinguishers replenished with them are being identified.
- 2.2 As the quantity of suspect Halon is considerable, it is not practical to remove all affected extinguishing equipment from use. The CAA is working closely with organisations involved in the supply chain to ascertain the potential variation from specification, the associated quantities and distribution. EASA is the responsible safety regulator for the fire suppression equipment and the CAA is providing information to assist them in determining any potential safety risk, mitigating actions and recovery programme.
- 2.3 The action currently being taken is as follows:
 - Suspect Halon batches and the companies supplied have been identified. The above companies have been requested to identify

extinguishers filled from the suspect batches and one filled from each batch will have the Halon tested against the relevant standard. This will allow the total quantity of contaminated Halon and the amount of contamination in each batch to be determined. Should operators/owners be requested to supply a particular extinguisher for testing they are urged to cooperate. Progress is being closely monitored by the CAA.

- Tests are to be carried out with Halon 1211 contaminated by varying amounts of impurity to determine its effectiveness as an extinguishant compared to Halon of the required specification.

2.4 Operators/owners will be kept informed as more information becomes available.

2.5 A FODCOM has been circulated to all AOC Holders and General Aviation Pilots providing similar information.

3 Recommendation

3.1 **Operators/owners should confirm the status of their equipment with the supplier in advance of a formal position from EASA.**

3.2 **Operators/owners should cooperate if requested to supply a particular extinguisher for testing.**

4 Queries

4.1 Any queries as a result of this AIRCOM should be addressed to Airworthiness Strategy and Policy at the following e-mail address: Requirements@caa.co.uk



Padhraic Kelleher
Head of Airworthiness

Date 12 October 2009

Recipients of new AIRCOMs are asked to ensure that these are copied to their 'in house' or contracted organisations, to relevant outside contractors, and to all members of their staff who could have an interest in the information or who need to take appropriate action in response to this Communication.

Review ASAP April 2010