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Air Safety Investigator
Office of Aviation Safety - Central

Date: May 9, 2023
Subject: CEN23LA170 - A&P Interview
Contact: Michael Craig A&P IA

Telephone interview of the mechanic who performed the last annual inspection on N1113B.

Mr. Craig stated that he performed the inspection of Luscombe 8E, N1113B, back in January 2023. As part of the inspection, he had to comply with the Luscombe Control Cable Airworthiness Directive (AD) 51-10-02 that was issued due to recurring cable failures. He stated that you can perform the inspection without removing the cables as stated in the AD. For the Rudder Cables, once the floorboards are removed from the cabin and the rear buckhead you can see almost the entire length of the left and right rudder cable. He performed the inspection by utilizing a flashlight and mirror to inspect the cable. To gain access to the sections of cable covered by the pulley and fairlead, he had a coworker move the rudder pedals to actuate the cable. During the visual inspection, he stated that he is looking for general cable appearance and broken strands.

Mr. Craig stated that he does not remove the cables, as the AD states, due to the time-consuming process to remove all the flight control cables instead of just performing the inspection in situ. Additionally, the AD only states that one "should" remove the cables "to the extent necessary to expose sections to be inspected". Due to the language of the AD using "should" extensively and the fact that these sections of cable can be exposed by simple flight control movements he saw no reason to remove the cable.

Mr. Craig stated that the AD is very loosely written and does not provide any guidance on how to perform the inspection. Most customers will balk at several hours of billed time along with rerigging the controls if he removed the cables and inspected them using a rag along with visual overview. He cannot justify spending customers time and money to perform a "should" removal. He also stated that the referenced historical technical material does not provide any guidance and is hard to find unless you already have the documentation.

Mr. Craig stated that the rudder cable system is a very simple design and that he never notices any issues with cable rubbing or fraying at the pulleys. He said that on a previous flight with the owner, that the owner would use the rudder pedals to adjust himself and stretch his back. The owner would do this by pressing down on both rudder pedals simultaneously causing undue stress on the cables. He told the owner that if he kept doing it that he would break a cable. He stated that he is curious if this is one the issues with the rudder cable system and is causing additional cable fatigue. He stated that due to the small cabin size of the Luscombe this is a method for the pilot to adjust themselves in the seat.

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