



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Brian C. Rayner
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: June 9, 2022

Person Contacted: Cody Barker – Mechanic

NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA257 Fairfield, NJ

Narrative:

Mr. Barker was a mechanic for Zip Aviation. He was interviewed at his place of employment and the following is a summary of the interview. Mr. Barker held an A&P certificate. He had 4 years of experience concurrent with and after graduation from an A&P certificate training program. Mr. Barker has worked for Zip Aviation for 9 months.

Mr. Barker found a worn feathering bearing in the tail rotor hub and blade assembly. The assembly was removed, sent for replacement of all 4 feathering bearings and returned to Zip Aviation for reinstallation on N98ZA.

According to Mr. Barker, Mr. Maryan Gulay assisted him in identifying and addressing the fault.

Neither Mr. Barker nor Mr. Gulay participated in the reinstallation of the tailrotor assembly.

END OF STATEMENT



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Date: June 9, 2022

Person Contacted: Justin Girona – Mechanic

NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA257 Fairfield, NJ

Narrative:

Mr. Girona was a mechanic for Zip Aviation. He was interviewed at his place of employment and the following is a summary of the interview. Mr. Girona held an A&P certificate. He had 3 years of experience concurrent with and after graduation from an A&P certificate training program. Mr. Girona has worked for Zip Aviation for 3 years.

Mr. Girona was working on a separate aircraft when he was approached by his supervisor, Manny Nalawatta, and asked to verify the torque application on the T/R mast nut on N98ZA. Mr. Girona was handed a torque wrench with a 'crow's foot' attachment and climbed the maintenance stand, applied the specified torque, and then started the "safety" with 32 thousandths safety wire. He did not complete the safety. Mr. Girona explained the safety wire path and its final anchor point and offered to complete the safety, but Mr. Nalawatta said he'd complete the task.

Mr. Girona said he performed no other tasks and was not asked for any other assistance on N98ZA.

END OF STATEMENT



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Date: June 9, 2022

Person Contacted: Manny Nalawatta – Director of Maintenance
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA257 Fairfield, NJ

Narrative:

Mr. Nalawatta was the Director of Maintenance for Zip Aviation. He provided a written statement and was interviewed at his place of employment and the following is a summary of the interview. Mr. Nalawatta held an A&P and IA certificate. He had 15 years of experience concurrent with and after graduation from an A&P certificate training program. Mr. Nalawatta has worked for Zip Aviation for 9 years.

Mr. Barker found a worn feathering bearing in the tail rotor hub and blade assembly. The assembly was removed, sent for replacement of all 4 feathering bearings and returned to Zip Aviation for reinstallation on N98ZA.

In a written statement, Mr. Nalawatta said he prepped the T/R assembly for installation by laying the parts out on a maintenance cart, performed the installation, and had Justin Ginora verify the mast nut torque. He then “finished” the installation and had Keven Mendes “verify” the work. A company pilot then preflighted the helicopter and performed “ground functional checks” and 3 consecutive maintenance runs to affect balancing of the tailrotor.

When asked, Mr. Nalawatta said the torque on the mast nut was checked by Mr. Ginora using the torque wrench. He said he then completed the installation. However, between the mast nut torque application and completion of the installation, Mr. Nalawatta was “called out” to consult on two different aircraft repairs. He was asked how long before he returned to the installation of the tailrotor assembly, and he could not recall.

Mr. Nalawatta had Kevin Mendes “verify” the final assembly. Mr. Mendes does not possess Inspection Authority, and neither does the company have an active RII program and neither was it required. The unwritten understanding was that Mr. Nalawatta would check work performed by his mechanics and he would ask them to check his work. “Whoever was available” would be the practice when Mr. Nalawatta was not available.

Mr. Nalawatta said he both printed the maintenance and parts manual pages for reference and backed the images up on his phone prior to beginning work.

END OF STATEMENT