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Subject: ERA24LA185, FAA Inspector Statement

Contact: Pauline O' Connor, FAA Inspector, Orlando FSDO

According to Inspector O'Connor, based on witness interviews, on April 19, 2024, a Bailey-Moyes Dragonfly was involved in an accident near Groveland, Florida, at Sheets Airstrip (FL42). The aircraft departed Runway 18 at approximately 1330 eastern daylight time and climbed to an estimated 200-300 feet before initiating a left turn toward the east. During the turn, the right wing folded upward, and the aircraft entered a spiral descent, impacting terrain approximately 500 feet beyond the departure end of the runway. The aircraft was destroyed, and the designer/builder sustained fatal injuries.

Examination of the wreckage revealed that the right lower wing strut was not properly attached to the fuselage. Inspection of the right lower wing strut and fuselage bulkhead connection determined that the strut block bolt had been incorrectly installed and did not pass through the hole in the strut block. Instead, the bolt was threaded into and secured to the fuselage bulkhead structure. No damage was noted to either the bolt or the strut block hole.

Inspection of the open-air T-hangar assembly area associated with the aircraft revealed a disorganized condition, with tools and hardware scattered on the dirt floor. No assembly checklist or assembly manual was present in the assembly area at the time of the inspection.

The aircraft did not have a data plate installed and had not been inspected by a Designated Airworthiness Representative (DAR) or a Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) inspector. An airworthiness certificate and operating limitations had not been

issued. The aircraft did not appear to be registered, and no registration markings were installed.

An exemplar aircraft was examined along with its instruction manuals to better understand the error made during the assembly of the accident airplane. Review of the manuals revealed the proper installation method for the lower wing strut attachment, which was not followed on the accident airplane.

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