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Safety recommendation: AIC 24-R14/24-2001

Addressed to: Tropicair Limited

Date issued: 29 November 2024

Investigation link: AIC 24-2001

Action status:

Introduction

On 8 June 2024 at 13:23 local time (03:23 UTC), the AIC was notified by the operator via telephone of a serious incident at Kikori Airstrip, Gulf Province, that occurred on 8 June 2024 at 11:43 local, involving a DHC6-300 Twin Otter aircraft, registered P2-BBM, owned and operated by Tropicair Limited. The AIC immediately commenced an investigation and deployed a team of investigators to perform on-site activities on 9 June 2024.

Occurrence

On 8 June 2024, at 11:43 local (01:43 UTC), a DHC6-300 aircraft registered P2-BBM, owned and operated by Tropicair Limited was conducting an IFR Fares and Freight flight from Kerema Airport to Kikori Airstrip, Gulf Province, Papua New Guinea, when during landing, the aircraft experienced a loss of directional control on touchdown and subsequent runway excursion.

There were 16 persons on board: 2 pilots and 14 passengers. None of the aircraft's occupants were injured.

Safety Deficiency Description

The investigation also noted that 4 days after the aircraft was released to service following the installation of a right hand propeller assembly on P2-BBM and, 11 days prior to the serious incident, an entry was made in the aircraft's technical log regarding a propeller synchronisation issue experienced by the flight crew. This entry was classified by the flight crew as a Non-Airworthy Defect (NAD), which means that there is no MEL reference for such a defect.

Review of the operators Maintenance Control Manual showed that there is a requirement for NADs to be assessed within three days from the day the defect is noted and a determination to be made, to rectify if it affects airworthiness, or to defer otherwise. This NAD was not addressed "within the prescribed 3 Days as per the operators *Maintenance Control Manual, Part A, Volume 8, Section 3.3.2 "Defect Control"* which states;

NAD category defects must be assessed by the Maintenance Contractor within three [3] days from the day the defect is noted (excluding the day noted), and a determination made that an item or system is, or is not, fit for its intended purpose. Items or systems determined not to be fit for their intended purpose, and affects airworthiness, must be rectified before further flight. Otherwise, the defect may be deferred IAW deferral procedure in 3.3.2.1.

All defects must be entered without delay into both the Hard Copy Technical Log and where possible, the EMT Software log entry, by the PIC, LAME¹ or DMC².

Maintenance Control Manual, Part A, Volume 8, Section 3.2.2.1 (a) states;

a) If after inspection, a LAME determines that the aircraft airworthiness is not affected and the item or system is fit for its intended purpose, the defect may be classified as a NAD on the Tech Log, noting a deferral period before certifying the deferral, and then Transferring to the Deferred Defect Log (DDL).

The investigation found from review of P2-BBM, Traxxall Work Order Number WP 028 that Part 2 of the Technical Log, which is used to record any deferred discrepancy or defect(s) DDL from Part 4 was not completed where necessary to ensure that the defect was deferred.

The details recorded in Part 2 would be the following;

- Maintenance Log Number;
- Description of the defect;
- Due Date for rectifying the defect (deferral period);
- Cleared By and;
- Date Cleared

Recommendation number AIC 24-R14/24-2001 to Tropicair Limited

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) recommends that Tropicair Limited ensures that:

Maintenance personnel are aware of procedures associated to addressing defects that are classified as Non-Airworthiness Defects (NAD), and that such defects are assessed, and maintenance actions determined by responsible maintenance personnel within the prescribed 3 days period as per the operators Maintenance Control Manual.

Action requested

The AIC requests that Tropicair Limited note recommendation AIC 24-R15/24-2001 and provide a response to the AIC within 90 days of the issue date, but no later than 27 February 2025 and explain (including with evidence) how Tropicair Limited has addressed the safety deficiency identified in the safety recommendation.



Maryanne J. Wal

Chief Commissioner

Tropicair Limited Response to Safety Recommendation AIC 24-R14/24-2001

On 27 February 2025, Tropicair Ltd responded via email providing their corrective action to address the *Safety Recommendation AIC 24-R14/24-2001*. According to Tropicair Ltd, as per the *Tropicair Maintenance Control Manual* defects classified as Non-Airworthiness Defects (NAD) are assessed and maintenance actions determined by responsible maintenance personnel within the prescribed 3-day period.

Tropicair Ltd advised PNG AIC of the corrective actions it has taken to address the *Safety Recommendation AIC 24-R14/24-2001*:

- Tropicair Ltd issued an Engineering Memo, to all maintenance personnel addressing the procedures for assessment and rectifications of defects raised on Tropicair aircrafts.

An Engineering Memo was issued by the Engineering Manager to all Maintenance Staff highlighting and addressing the existing procedures for assessment and rectification of defects being raised on Tropicair aircraft.

It was discussed in the memo that as per the *Maintenance Control Manual (MCM) procedure MCM 3.3.2*, when a defect is recorded in the aircraft Technical Log the responsibility remains with the Part 145 holder to immediately assess the discrepancy to classify the severity of the defect. The LAME will either ground the aircraft or apply valid MEL and record in the assigned defer defect line below the reported defect. If assessed as an NAD, record the same in the *Technical Log Section 5* in the defer defect line below the defect entry. The assessment of the NAD is to be performed by the Part 145 maintenance personnel within 3 days of entry as per *MCM 3.3.2*

Tropicair Ltd provided a copy of the Engineering Memo which was issued to all the Maintenance personnel.

PNG AIC assessment of Helifix Operations Limited Response

The AIC reviewed Tropicair corrective actions to address *Safety Recommendation AIC 24-R14/24-2001* and notes that the corrective actions addressed the safety deficiency in the safety recommendation.

The AIC assigned this response as *satisfactory rating*.

The AIC recorded the Status of the AIC Recommendation: **CLOSED**



Maryanne J. Wal

Chief Commissioner

28 May 2025