



SAIB: CE-10-39
Date: July 23, 2010

SUBJ: Equipment - Furnishings

This is information only. Recommendations aren't mandatory.

Introduction

This Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin (SAIB) advises you of an airworthiness concern regarding possible interference between the front seat lap belt and the rear rudder pedals on American Champion Aircraft Corporation (ACAC) Models 7ECA, 7GCAA, 7GCBC, 7KCAB, 8KCAB, & 8GCBC.

At this time, this airworthiness concern is not considered an unsafe condition that would warrant an airworthiness directive action under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR part 39).

Background

This SAIB resulted from an incident where an American Champion model 8KCAB (Decathlon) departed the runway upon landing. It was determined that upon application of full left rudder by the front seat pilot, the rearward moving aft right rudder pedal had caught on the right side of the front dual lap belt aerobatic harness; interfering with the rearward movement of the pedal and possibly applying right braking. Upon examination of a video of the installation it was discovered that the dual lap belt aerobatic harness was improperly installed in the airplane, which contributed to the interference.

Examination of several other Decathlon airplanes with Hooker dual lap belt aerobatic harnesses revealed that the clearance between the aft rudder pedals and the front seat aerobatic harness is typically less than 1 inch. Although American Champion airplanes have been safely operating with aerobatic harnesses for at least 15 years in the field, American Champion has been proactive in avoiding any potential interference problem through the issuance of Service Letter number 433. The service letter specifies two items. First it introduces a flight manual supplement that provides for a Pre-Start and a Pre-Flight check of the front seat lap belt for proper tension and clearance with the aft seat rudder pedals. Second the service letter provides instructions for an easy change applicable to American Champion dual lap belt installations (Hooker Competition harnesses) only. The change moves the front seat upper secondary lap belt anchor fitting from the outside of the outer lug to the inside of the outer lug. This provides for additional clearance between the upper (secondary) lap belt and the aft rudder pedals (see Figure 4 of the service letter)

The change described above may also apply to dual Hooker lap/seat/safety belt installations done via Supplemental Type Certificate number SA312CH on eligible airplanes. In this case, dual lap/seat/safety belt installations may not be limited to only the Hooker Competition harness, but any Hooker dual lap belt installation that uses dual floor mounting tabs or lugs as the attach points for the dual lap/seat/safety belts. In some older airplanes manufactured by a previous type certificate holder, there may not be dual floor mount tabs or lugs. In these cases, the secondary lap belt was connected to a cross tube under the floor. Since the outer tab or lug does not exist in these installations, the American Champion change is not applicable.

This airworthiness action has been taken after consideration of the responses from ACAC as well as airplane owners/ operators through relevant associations and type clubs, using the procedures found in the Small Airplane Directorate Airworthiness Directives Manual Supplement (Airworthiness Concern Process Guide).

Recommendations

We recommend that all that ACAC model airplanes identified in the introduction above equipped with Hooker lap/seat/safety belt have American Champion Service Bulletin number 433 incorporated. For airplanes equipped with dual lap/seat/safety belt Hooker harnesses that use airplane equipped floor mounted attach lugs/tabs for each of the two harnesses, the upper or secondary lap belt should be moved from the outside of the outer attach lug/tab to the inside of the outer attach lug/tab per figure 4 of the service bulletin.

For Further Information Contact

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For Related Service Information Contact

To obtain a copy of American Champion service letter number 433, contact American Champion Aircraft Corporation, P.O. Box 37, 32032 Washington Ave. – Hwy. D, Rochester, WI 53167; or visit their website at www.amerchampionaircraft.com, select “Technical” and scroll down to service letter number 433.