

The Technician's Role in Maintenance Error Prevention



The last two articles discussed the role of management and supervisors in preventing maintenance errors. Now is the time to discuss the role of technicians & the individuals who actually perform the maintenance, repairs, inspections, or other work on the aeronautical product or aircraft.

This is where the buck stops, where the cookie crumbles. As aviation maintenance technicians we have a very full plate. We have to source the correct and current data to complete each assigned task. The right parts, hardware, and tools are all needed and it is up to us to find them.

With the combination of technical and regulatory data, tools, and common sense, we do a remarkable job and have a truly phenomenal safety record. But for various reasons, we still read about technicians making errors in judgment that lead to incidents.

What can we do about the factors that affect our judgment and lead to incidents? First, look at what can affect our judgment. Our individual character, whether aggressive, autonomous, or caring affects our thought process when trying to solve a problem. From these commonly heard statements, see what type of character you are:

- "Just tell me what I need to know."
- "Let's get it done."
- "It flew in, it will fly out."
- "I can do this by myself."
- "That is the way we always have done it, why do we have to change"?
- "How does everybody feel today?"
- "Who needs a hand?"

With all of the different behavioral types on the shop floor, it is amazing we accomplish anything and do not have more conflict with each other than actually occurs.

If we survey managers and supervisors regarding what they expect from aviation maintenance technicians, we will get a long list of desired behaviors.

But, what behavior should we expect of ourselves?

- Strive to improve workplace communication.
- Support teamwork
- Take pride in your signature
- Stay knowledgeable in your field
- Raise issues when necessary, but also come to the table with solutions
- Keep both personal and job pressure in perspective
- Admit mistakes when they occur
- Maintain your understanding of right and wrong and do not let someone convince you to accept something that you know is wrong or will endanger others

As you read this list how many of you can say 'Yes' to all of the above? We are in a tough profession that demands we adhere to strict standards, perform flawlessly, and continue to maintain our technical competence in a rapidly changing world of technology.

As aviation professionals we share common characteristics. We maintain a high degree of competence and skill in our trade. We have a commitment to the greater public good, provided by the quality of our work and integrity. We are in a critical profession where there is nearly no tolerance for a mistake.

Recognize that you are human and strive to improve your character and professionalism to work in concert with your fellow aviation maintenance professionals by creating safety nets to ensure that you do not play a starring role in an accident or serious incident.