

## SIKORSKY AVIATION SAFETY PROGRAM

# NTSB Gets An Up Close Look

A member of the National Transportation Safety Board has seen first-hand Sikorsky's initiatives in improving flight safety.

John J. Goglia, one of five presidential appointees to the NTSB, recently participated in a Sikorsky Aircraft sponsored course, Human Factors in Aviation Maintenance.

Goglia is an experienced aircraft mechanic, and the first active mechanic to be appointed to the NTSB. He came away from the course impressed with its thoroughness and applicability. Presented by Grey Owl Aviation Consultants, the courses have been attended by over 650 hourly and salaried employees over the last 18 months, including all personnel working in Production, VH, and West Palm Beach Flight Operations. In addition, the majority of Final Assembly personnel have taken part in the course.

Human Factors is a broad and often overused term in aviation.

Recent investigations have prompted investigators to take a closer look at what were thought to be "material or maintenance" related accidents. An accident is not typically caused by one event alone, but only when several different events begin linking together, creating what investigators call the 'Accident Chain'. Breaking any one of the links in an accident chain may prevent the accident from occurring. It became apparent that human factors in maintenance could become a part of that chain.

Training and awareness in these human factors may help prevent these links from forming.

When a maintenance issue was detected in late 1997, Production Flight Operations and Product Integrity personnel began an investigation into the cause. They made

immediate changes to some of the tools required for the task, as well as the paperwork documenting the process. As a result of Sikorsky changing the way it looked at human factors in maintenance, similar events have been eliminated.

Chris Lowenstein, an Aircraft Safety Investigator in the Product Safety department, surfed to the FAA web page and found a great deal of information.

The FAA, Transport Canada, and the British CAA would soon be hosting a worldwide conference on the issue. Chris, along with Rich Friot, Manager of Flight Operations and Ron Irons of the Product Integrity Department presented an awareness plan to upper management. Shortly thereafter, Rich and Chris went to London, England in March 1998 to attend the conference.

At the conference, they learned about many of the recent developments in maintenance human factors. They recommended that Sikorsky implement a training program to increase awareness among the personnel responsible for maintenance and inspection of flight aircraft. The evaluation team was expanded to include representation of hourly personnel and managers from Stratford and West Palm.



John J. Goglia (center) discusses Sikorsky aviation safety initiatives with Doug Walker.

Grey Owl Aviation Consultants was selected to perform the training. The course introduces course objectives and includes a self-evaluation of personal characteristics, behavioral analysis, and general human factors information. The course uses a number of actual case studies to demonstrate these concepts. Feedback from participants has been positive. Many employees remarked that they were amazed how the program enabled them to look at themselves in a new light, and see how interactions with others affect their job performance.

As a result, we have experienced a decrease in the number of human factor incidents in the hangar. While safety is a difficult thing to measure, this appears to be related to increased awareness in the hangar.

Plans are in work now for a shortened refresher course to maintain this high level of training.