

Chapter 2: Aircraft Visual Inspections

Six aircraft were subject to the detailed visual inspections described in Chapter 1 and Appendix 1.2, Sub-appendix 1.2.3. The first six sections of this chapter discuss the individual aircraft and inspections. The last section of this chapter presents the summary results of all the inspections. The database of specific findings has been presented to ATSRAC as a separate deliverable.

In general, the inspection team followed the Intrusive Inspection Working Group's Protocol for intrusive inspections. However, due to time constraints and the limited availability of candidate aircraft, exceptions to the protocol were made. Other changes to the protocol were allowed after it was determined that those changes would facilitate the inspection without diminishing the extent or quality of the results. General exceptions to the protocol include:

- The selection process for aircraft was abbreviated. The Working Group chairman selected candidates based solely on correspondence with the aircrafts' owners or custodians.
- Due to time constraints and the unavailability of experienced inspectors, the supplemental non-intrusive inspection (protocol 6 of Appendix 1.2) was performed on the DC-9 aircraft only.
- Because it was felt that the findings tags would not influence outcome of the nondestructive testing, inspection tags were not removed prior to examination by the nondestructive testing contractor.

Though not specifically mandated by the protocol, it was assumed that the visual inspection and follow-on non-destructive testing would be performed sequentially in the same week. In actuality, the nondestructive testing was performed several weeks after the visual inspection. Precautions were taken to ensure the state of the aircraft wiring remained constant in the interim.

Aircraft specific exceptions to the protocol are noted below.

Aircraft Inspections lasted between 2 and 4 days, depending on the availability of inspectors, experience level of the working group, and the need to convene the working group for other purposes during the inspection period.

Illustrative pictures of typical zones are shown in Figures 2-1 through 2-8.



Figure 2-1: Boeing 747 Electronics Rack, EE Bay.



Figure 2-2: A300 Cockpit



Figure 2-3: DC-9-1 Cockpit showing specimen and findings labels



Figure 2-4: L1011 Wing Leading Edge with red tape demarcating specimens



Figure 2-5: DC-9-2 Tail Cone looking forward to bulkhead



Figure 2-6: L1011 Under Floor Panels showing excessive dust and lint build-up.



Figure 2-7: L1011 Main Cabin showing PCU cables



Figure 2-8: DC-10 Wheel Well

Airbus A300

The Airbus A300-B4/203 was inspected in Ardmore, Oklahoma starting on September 24, 1999. It was retired to Ardmore, OK in July 1999 where it remained until the inspection.

The inspection team was composed of:

Pall Arnason	NAVAIR	Dave Johnson	USAF
Jean-Luc Ballenghien	Airbus	Colin Kane	Airbus
Christian Garros	Airbus	Pascal Santi	Airbus
Issa Ghoreishi	Boeing	Joe Spielman	DHL
Tony Harbottle	Airbus	Chris Smith	FAA
Glenn Hiser	FedEx	Fred Sobeck	FAA

The inspection team followed the Intrusive Inspection Working Group's Protocol for intrusive inspections. Inspection confirmed that the majority of the wire on the aircraft was polyimide.

Some wire damage was found, particularly near connectors. However, it was not certain if this damage was due to in-service degradation or aircraft decommissioning activities. FEP topcoat flaking was common throughout the aircraft.

The inspection team made the determination that no finding rose to the level of a Reportable Significant Condition¹ (RSC)².

DC-9(1)

The DC-9 was inspected in Ardmore, Oklahoma starting on December 6, 1999. It was retired to Ardmore, OK in August, 1999 where it remained until the inspection.

The inspection team was composed of:

Pall Arnason	NAVAIR	Robert McGuire	FAA
Jean-Luc Ballenghien	Airbus	Larry Stevick	Northwest Airlines
Ashok Bhattacharya	Boeing	Joe Spielman	DHL
Edward Block	NADA	Chris Smith	FAA
Paul Buron	Boeing	Fred Sobeck	FAA
Walter Cinibulk	Raychem	Don Tandy	Tensolite
Xavier Mas	Airbus	Hank Zuberer	United Airlines
Dominique Mazzarino	Airbus		

The inspection team followed the Intrusive Inspection Working Group's Protocol for intrusive inspections. Inspection confirmed that the majority of the wire on the aircraft was PVC/Glass/Nylon.

¹ A Reportable Significant Condition (RSC) is a specific condition which, in the absence of information to the contrary, the working group could not confirm as having little or no safety impact for a broad fleet of revenue service aircraft. Any finding the working group classified as an RSC was reported to the manufacturer for analysis and resolution. All RSC's are discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

² The subsequent determination that delamination had initiated on several wires in the LCL bundle was at that time categorized as an RSC.

The team members found that many tie straps were installed and terminated with an improper tool leaving sharp edges, which could cause injury or abrade wiring. Improper tension was also a concern. Improper plastic tie straps were used in SWAMP areas (particularly the wheel wells). In wheel wells, some of the straps were installed above mechanical pulleys, which is unacceptable in military applications.

The inspection team made the determination that no finding rose to the level of a potential RSC.

747

The 747 was inspected in Roswell, New Mexico starting on February 7, 2000. The aircraft was retired to Roswell, NM in May, 1999 where it remained until the inspection.

The inspection team was composed of:

Pall Arnason	NAVAIR	Dominique Mazzarino	Airbus
Jean-Luc Ballenghien	Airbus	Robert McGuire	FAA
Peter Bersuch	Airbus	Ian McLellan	Transport Canada
Edward Block	NADA	Tom Newcombe	FAA
Walter Cinibulk	Raychem	Larry Stevick	Northwest Airlines
Jean Pierre Ferlier	Alcatel Cable	Lonnie Williams	Boeing
Issa Ghoreishi	Boeing	Hank Zuberer	United Airlines
Dave Johnson	USAF	Lukas Zuellig	Swissair
Xavier Mas	Airbus		

The inspection team followed the Intrusive Inspection Working Group's Protocol for intrusive inspections, with the exception that the aircraft was retired for 9 months (the protocol called for a maximum retirement of 6 months). Inspection confirmed that the majority of the wire on the aircraft was Poly X, but a significant number of other wire types were also present.³

The inspection team found a wire in the cockpit showing evidence of charring caused by short circuit. Also in the cockpit the team found three adjacent wires in a bundle having insulation damage exposing the conductor.

In the forward cargo compartment, just behind the avionics rack, the team found severe chafing in a power feeder cable down to and into the conductor. This chafing was due to two power feeder cables coming in contact with one another and rubbing due to vibration (these power feeders coming in contact with one another was an isolated incident, and is not common to other 747's).

The inspection team made the determination that the power feeder chafing rose to the level of a potential RSC. The inspection team notified the manufacturer about the chafed power feeder.

DC-9(2)

The DC-9 was inspected in Miami, Florida starting on May, 2000. It was retired to Miami, Florida in December, 1999 where it remained until the inspection.

The inspection team was composed of:

³ See, Appendix 4.2, Raytheon report.

Pall Arnason	NAVAIR	Lee Koegel	FAA
Jean-Luc Ballenghien	Airbus	Dominique Mazzarino	Airbus
John Beatty	Tensolite	Roberto Mata	Sandia National Labs
Peter Bersuch	Airbus	Robert McGuire	FAA
Edward Block	NADA	Ian McLellan	Transport Canada
Walter Cinibulk	Raychem	Cliff Pettigrew	Boeing
Christian Garros	Airbus	Chris Smith	FAA
David Johnson	USAF	Elvin Wheeler	FAA

Though the protocol called for the participation of inspectors who took part in the model specific inspections, no such inspectors could attend this inspection. Otherwise, the inspection team followed the Intrusive Inspection Working Group's Protocol for intrusive inspections. Inspection confirmed that the majority of the wire on the aircraft was PVC/Glass/Nylon.

In a meeting immediately subsequent to the inspection the working group determined that three specific findings constituted RSC's to be reported to the aircraft manufacturer⁴:

- The inspection team found blackening and severe embrittlement of wires leading to the wing tip lighting at both wing tips. There was some speculation that this might be due to wing-tip light modifications, which resulted in either localized heating or excessive electrical loading of the wire.
- The inspection team found severe embrittlement and failures of plastic bundle ties in the vicinity of the internal fluorescent lighting. This failure was not observed in other locations on the aircraft.
- The inspection team found burnt wires beneath spiral wrap in the tail cone on corresponding wire bundles on either side of the aft staircase. There was no indication of burn on the spiral wrap, indicating that the wrap was put in place after the burning had occurred, or that the failure was internally generated as in a short between wires.

Overall, the inspection team found the general condition of the wire to be poor. In particular, the wire in the tail cone exhibited widespread cracking of the outer nylon jacket, discoloration of the wire inconsistent with staining, and apparent embitterment when flexed.

DC-10

The DC-10 was inspected in Venice, Italy starting on June 27, 2000. The airplane was flown to Venice, where it was undergoing a passenger to cargo conversion. Because the conversion included a complete avionics and electrical system upgrade, all electrical wires on the aircraft (with the exception of the power feeder cables) were available to be inspected, tested, and removed.

The inspection team was composed of:

Jean-Luc Ballenghien	Airbus	Issa Ghoreishi	Boeing
John Beatty	Tensolite	Dominique Mazzarino	Airbus
Edward Block	NADA	Robert McGuire	FAA
Paul Buron	Boeing	Chris Smith	FAA
Walter Cinibulk	Raychem	Hank Zuberer	United Airlines
Christian Garros	Airbus	Lukas Zuellig	Swissair

⁴ The subsequent discovery of a breach in a power-feeder cable was later identified as a forth RSC for this aircraft.

Though the protocol called for the participation of inspectors who took part in the model specific inspections, no such inspectors could attend this inspection. Hank Zuberer from United Airlines had similar aircraft inspection experience.

Because the aircraft was in the process of being modified for eventual return to service, minor adjustments to the protocol were made. In particular, the inspection team was not allowed to remove any power feeder cables, therefore no power feeders were selected for further testing.

Inspection confirmed that the majority of the wire in the cockpit was Cross-Linked ETFE (the targeted wire type). Wire in the passenger cabin, however, appeared to be mostly polyimide.

The inspection team made the determination that no finding rose to the level of a potential RSC.

L1011

The L1011 was inspected in Tucson, Arizona starting on June 16, 2000. It was retired to Tucson, AZ in June, 1999 where it remained until the inspection.

The inspection team was composed of:

Jean-Luc Ballenghien	Airbus	Dave Johnson	USAF
Edward Block	NADA	Dominique Mazzarino	Airbus
Walter Cinibulk	Raychem	Robert McGuire	FAA
Christian Garros	Airbus	Ian McLellan	Transport Canada
Issa Ghoreishi	Boeing	Hank Zuberer	United Airlines

Though the protocol called for the participation of inspectors who took part in the model specific inspections, no such inspectors could attend this inspection. Hank Zuberer from United Airlines had similar aircraft inspection experience. Otherwise, the inspection team followed the Intrusive Inspection Working Group's Protocol for intrusive inspections, with the exception that the aircraft was retired for 12 months (the protocol called for a maximum retirement of 6 months). Inspection confirmed that the majority of the wire on the aircraft was Polyimide.

The inspection team made the determination that no finding rose to the level of a potential RSC⁵.

Summary Results

Each condition was individually classified according to categories established by the working group. The Working Group based its condition categories on the categories established by the ASTF non-intrusive inspection working group for their inspection of 81 revenue service aircraft. Though the categories used in this present study are more specific, there exists a unique combination of these categories that allows the direct comparison of the findings of this project with those of the non-intrusive inspections. The categories used in this present study were defined as:

Connectors

Insert Damage or Deterioration: Any damage or deterioration to a connector insert. Includes missing parts.

Contact Arcing: Any evidence of arcing on the connector contacts.

Contact Fretting: Any evidence of fretting (wear) on the connector contacts.

Missing or Damaged Backshell: Any damage, deterioration, or mis-configuration of the connector backshell.

⁵ Subsequently the working group reconsidered the visual findings for this aircraft. At that time it was determined that a finding on the wiring in the cockpit overhead circuit breaker panel rose to the level of RSC.

Loose or Worn B-Nuts: Any damage, deterioration, or mis-configuration, mis-installation or loosening of connector B-Nuts. Includes missing B-nuts.

Connector Corrosion: Corrosion on or in connector.

Other Connector Conditions: Other connector conditions not specifically listed above.

Terminations

Condition and Security of Ground Points: Any damage, deterioration, or mis-configuration of ground points.

Inadequate Drip Loops: Missing or ineffective drip loops.

Incorrect Hardware Build-up, Torque: Mis-configuration or loosening of wire terminations.

Heat Damaged Terminations: Evidence of heat damage to terminations or termination hardware.

Corroded Terminations: Corroded terminations or termination hardware.

Contaminated Terminations: Contamination terminations and termination hardware.

Other Termination Conditions: Other termination conditions not specifically listed above.

Installation

Inadequate Clearance to Structure: Wire with insufficient clearance to aircraft structure or components (excluding other wire).

Inadequate Wire Segregation: Insufficient segregation of wire or wire bundles. Includes inappropriate contact of bundles without clamping or support.

Missing or Deteriorated Pressure Seals: Missing, deteriorated, or damaged pressure seals.

Sleeving/Conduit Condition: Damaged, deteriorated or mis-configured wire sleeving or conduit.

Bend Radius: Inappropriate bend radius.

Clamp Condition, Sizing, or Spacing: Any problem associated with clamping and support of wire or wire bundles.

Missing or Deteriorated Grommets: Missing, deteriorated, or damaged grommets.

Excessive Slacking: Excessive play in a wire or wire bundle.

Excessive Tension: Excessive tension in a wire or wire bundle.

T-Strip Condition, Hardware Build-up: Same as Terminations, Incorrect Hardware Build-up, Torque.

Missing or Damaged Wire Ties: Missing, damaged, or mis-configured wire ties.

Other Installation Conditions: Other installation conditions not specifically listed above.

Wire

Inadequate Repair: An inadequate or inappropriate repair to *wire*.

Degraded Repair: A deteriorated *wire* repair.

Heat Damage: Heat Damaged *wire*.

Arcing: Evidence of arcing from a *wire*.

Vibration Damage: a.k.a *wire* chafing

Collateral Damage: Indirect *wire* or *wire bundle* damage resulting from a traumatic event in the vicinity of that wire or bundle.

Cracked Insulation: A breach or partial breach in the *wire* insulation resulting from excessive embrittlement of the insulation.

Nontraumatic Abrasion: a.k.a *wire* chafing. Despite the redundancy with Vibration Damage, this category must remain in order to ensure compatibility (comparability) to ASTF categories.

Traumatic Damage: Any damage to a *wire* or *wire bundle* resulting from sudden impact, excessive shear, excessive compression, excessive tension, or incision.

Broken Shield: Severed or partially severed wire shielding.

Broken Conductor: Severed or partially severed wire conductor.

Exposed Shield: Exposed wire shield

Exposed Conductor: Exposed wire conductor.

Fluid or Chemical Contamination: Unexpected fluid or chemical contamination on *wire*.

Wire Corrosion: Corrosion of *wire* conductor or chemically induced deterioration of *wire* insulation.

Other Wire Conditions: Other *wire* condition not specifically mentioned above.

Table 2-1 shows the correspondence of categories used in this intrusive inspection project with categories used in the ASTF nonintrusive project.

Table 2-2 is a summary of all findings and significant⁶ findings by aircraft and finding category. Aircraft specific figures represent all findings throughout all zones. Totals are given for

- all findings on all aircraft,
- all significant findings for all aircraft,
- findings from all aircraft on pre-selected specimens, and
- significant findings from all aircraft on pre-selected specimens only.

Table 2-3 compares the results of the intrusive inspections with those of the non-intrusive inspections. The figures are in findings per 1000 findings (i.e. the row totals are all 1000). The totals represent

- non-intrusive findings (by category) per 1000 total finds
- intrusive findings per 1000 total finds
- significant intrusive findings per 1000 significant finds

It should be noted that all data has undergone a preliminary validation, but only those findings involving a wire condition have received full validation (working group review and approval of the findings description and classification).

Intrusive Categories	ASTF Nonintrusive Categories
Connectors	Connectors
Insert Damage or Deterioration	Insert Damage or Deterioration
Contact Arcing	Contact Arcing/Fretting
Contact Fretting	
Missing or Damaged Backshell	Missing or Damaged Backshell
	Connector Backshell Strain Relief
Loose or Worn B-Nuts	Loose or Worn B-Nuts
Connector Corrosion	Other Connector Conditions
Other Connector Conditions	

⁶ A significant finding was defined by the inspection protocol to be any finding which – if the aircraft were still in revenue service – would require repair.

Terminations	Terminations
Condition and Security of Ground Points	Condition and Security of Ground Points
Inadequate Drip Loops	Inadequate Drip Loops
Incorrect Hardware Build-up, Torque	Incorrect Hardware Build-up, Torque
Heat Damaged Terminations	Heat Damaged/Corroded Terminations
Corroded Terminations	
Contaminated Terminations	Other Termination Conditions
Other Termination Conditions	
Installation	Installation
Inadequate Clearance to Structure	Inadequate Clearance to Structure
Missing or Deteriorated Pressure Seals	Missing or Deteriorated Pressure Seals
Sleeving/Conduit Condition	Sleeving/Conduit Condition
Bend Radius	Bend Radius
Clamp Condition, Sizing, or Spacing	Clamp Condition, Sizing, or Spacing
Missing or Deteriorated Grommets	Missing or Deteriorated Grommets
Excessive Slacking	Excessive Slacking
T-Strip Condition, Hardware Build-up	T-Strip Condition, Hardware Build-up
Missing or Damaged Wire Ties	Other Installation Conditions
Excessive Tension	
Inadequate Wire Segregation	
Other Installation Conditions	
Wire	Wire
Inadequate Repair	Previous Repairs, Condition of
Degraded Repair	
Heat Damage	Heat/Vibration Damage
Vibration Damage	
Collateral Damage	Indirect Damage
Cracked Insulation	
Non-traumatic Abrasion	Cracked/Abraded Insulation
Traumatic Damage	
Broken Shield	Broken Shield/Conductor
Broken Conductor	
Exposed Shield	Exposed Shield/Conductor
Exposed Conductor	
Fluid or Chemical Contamination	Fluid or Chemical Contamination
Wire Corrosion	Wire Corrosion
Arcing	Other Wire Conditions
Other Wire Conditions	

Table 2-1: Correspondence of condition categories to ASTF condition categories.

	CONNECTORS						TERMINATIONS						INSTALLATION (GENERAL)																			
	Insert Damage or Deterioration	Contact Arcing	Contact Fretting	Missing or Damaged Backshell	Loose or Worn B-Nuts	Connector Corrosion	Other Connector	Condition and Security of Ground Points	Inadequate Drip Loops	Incorrect Hardware Build-up, Torque	Heat Damaged Termination	Corroded Terminations	Contaminated Terminations	Other Terminations	Inadequate Clearance to Structure	Inadequate Bundle Segregation	Missing or Deteriorated Pressure Seals	Sleeving Condition	Bend Radius	Clamp Condition, Sizing, or Spacing	Missing or Deteriorated Grommets	Excessive Slacking	Excessive Tension	T-Strips Condition, Hardware Build-up	Debris Accumulation	Significant Dust and Lint Build-up	Missing or Damaged Wire Ties	Other Installation	Inadequate Repair	Degraded Repair	Heat Damage	Arcing
A300-1	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	6	0	1	0	1	0	3	5	0	0	0	4	10	0	9	5	1	2	3	0	5	4	0	0	0
DC-9-1	1	0	0	0	1	1	4	0	1	2	0	10	1	1	28	0	1	5	10	34	1	1	1	1	6	9	4	7	1	1	1	0
747-1	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	1	0	3	0	2	33	7	0	8	12	38	3	10	6	1	10	10	5	32	2	2	0	0
DC-9-2	1	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	30	4	0	2	14	21	3	10	1	0	4	7	1	21	5	0	14	0
DC-10	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	19	0	0	0	5	17	3	8	2	1	1	5	0	19	1	0	0	0
L1011	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	28	1	0	1	3	14	3	19	3	0	6	5	2	8	6	1	0	0
Totals	5	1	0	5	2	5	15	10	4	4	0	17	2	8	143	12	1	16	48	134	13	57	18	4	29	39	12	92	19	4	15	2
Significant	3	1	0	5	2	1	5	9	1	3	0	8	1	6	101	10	0	10	22	70	8	42	10	2	13	17	9	36	12	2	15	0
Totals Pre-selected	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	13	1	0	2	7	10	0	2	1	0	3	3	3	4	4	0	7	0
Pre-selected Significant	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	9	1	0	1	3	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	2	2	0	7	0

Table 2-2 Visual Inspection Findings by Aircraft

	CONNECTORS							TERMINATIONS						INSTALLATION (GENERAL)										
	INSERT DAMAGE/DETERIORATION	CONTACT ARCING/FRETTING	MISSING DUMMY CONTACTS/SEAL PLUGS	MISSING/DAMAGED BACKSHELLS	CONNECTOR BACKSHELL STRAIN RELIEF	LOOSE OR WORN B-NUTS	OTHER	GROUND POINTS - CONDITION/SECURITY	INADEQUATE DRIP LOOPS(S)	CORRECT HARDWARE BUILDUP/TORQUE	HEAT DAMAGE/CORROSION	OTHER	INADEQUATE CLEARANCE TO STRUCTURE	MISSING/DETERIORATED PRESSURE SEALS	SLEEVING/DONUTS CONDITION	BEND RADIUS (10X WIRE/BUDNLE DIA.)	CLAMP CONDITION/SIZING/SPACING	MISSING/DETERIORATED GROMMETS	DEBRIS ACCUMULATIONS ON WIRE BUNDLES	EXCESSIVE SLACK/SAG BETWEEN CLAMPS	T-STRIP CONDITION/HARDWARE BUILDUP	SIGNIFICANT DUST AND LINT BUILDUP	OTHER	PREVIOUS REPAIRS/CONDITION OF
Non-Intrusive/1000	16	1	8	15	22	5	31	28	3	4	14	15	97	2	58	11	146	14	58	76	16	73	44	
Intrusive/1000	5	1	0	5	x	2	21	10	4	4	18	10	149	1	17	50	140	14	30	59	4	41	135	
Significant Intrusive/1000	5	2	0	9	x	3	10	15	2	5	14	12	172	0	17	37	119	14	22	72	3	29	107	

Table 2-3: Visual Inspection Finding Comparison Between the Intrusive And Non-Intrusive Inspections