

SECTION 3. PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

4-36. FLUTTER AND VIBRATION PRECAUTIONS. To prevent the occurrence of severe vibration or flutter of flight control surfaces during flight, precautions must be taken to stay within the design balance limitations when performing maintenance or repair.

a. Balance Changes. The importance of retaining the proper balance and rigidity of aircraft control surfaces cannot be overemphasized. The effect of repair or weight change on the balance and center of gravity is proportionately greater on lighter surfaces than on the older heavier designs. As a general rule, repair the control surface in such a manner that the weight distribution is not affected in any way, in order to preclude the occurrence of flutter of the control surface in flight. Under certain conditions, counter-balance weight is added forward of the hinge line to maintain balance. Add or remove balance weights only when necessary in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Flight testing must be accomplished to ensure flutter is not a problem. Failure to check and retain control surface balance within the original or maximum allowable value could result in a serious flight hazard.

b. Painting and Refinishing. Special emphasis is directed to the effect of too many extra coats of paint on balanced control surfaces. Mechanics must avoid adding additional coats of paint in excess of what the manufacturer originally applied. If available consult the aircraft manufacturer's instructions relative to finishing and balance of control surfaces.

c. Trapped Water or Ice. Instances of flutter have occurred from unbalanced conditions caused by the collection of water or ice within the surface. Therefore, ventilation and

drainage provisions must be checked and retained when maintenance is being done.

d. Trim Tab Maintenance. Loose or vibrating trim tabs will increase wear of actuating mechanisms and hinge points which may develop into serious flutter conditions. When this happens, primary control surfaces are highly susceptible to wear, deformation, and fatigue failures because of the buffeting nature of the airflow over the tab mechanism. Trailing-edge play of the tab may increase, creating an unsafe flutter condition. Careful inspection of the tab and its mechanism should be conducted during overhaul and annual inspection periods. Compared to other flight control systems on the aircraft, only a minor amount of tab-mechanism wear can be tolerated.

(1) Free play and stiffness may best be measured by a simple static test where "upward" and "downward" (or "leftward" and "rightward") point forces are applied near the trailing edge of the tab at the span-wise attachment of the actuator (so as not to twist the tab). The control surface to which the trim tab is attached should be locked in place. Rotational deflection readings are then taken near the tab trailing edge using an appropriate measuring device, such as a dial gauge. Several deflection readings should be taken using loads first applied in one direction, then in the opposite. If the tab span does not exceed 35 percent of the span of the supporting control surface, the total free play at the tab trailing edge should not exceed 2 percent of the tab chord. If the tab span equals or exceeds 35 percent of the span of the supporting control surface, the total free play at the tab trailing edge should not exceed 1 percent of the distance from the tab hinge line to the trailing edge of the tab perpendicular to the tab hinge line. For example, a tab that has a chord of

4 inches and less than or equal to 35 percent of the control surface span would have a maximum permissible free play of 4 inches x 0.020 or 0.080 inches (total motion up and down) measured at the trailing edge. Correct any free play in excess of this amount.

(2) Care must also be exercised during repair or rework to prevent stress concentration points or areas that could increase the fatigue susceptibility of the trim tab system. Advisory Circular (AC) 23.629-1A, Means of Compliance with Section 23.629, "Flutter," contains additional information on this subject.

NOTE: If the pilot has experienced flutter, or thinks he/she has, then a complete inspection of the aircraft flight control system and all related components including rod ends, bearings, hinges, and bellcranks must be accomplished. Suspected parts should be replaced.

4-37. LOAD FACTORS FOR REPAIRS.

In order to design an effective repair to a sheet metal aircraft, the stresses that act on the structure must be understood.

a. Six types of major stresses are known and should be considered when making repairs. These are tension, compression, bending, torsion, shear, and bearing

b. The design of an aircraft repair is complicated by the requirement that it be as light as possible. If weight were not critical, repairs could be made with a large margin of safety. But in actual practice, repairs must be strong enough to carry all of the loads with the required factor of safety, but they must not have too much extra strength. A joint that is too weak cannot be tolerated, but neither can one that is too strong because it can create stress risers that may cause cracks in other locations.

4-38. TRANSFER OF STRESSES WITHIN A STRUCTURE. An aircraft structure must be designed in such a way that it will accept all of the stresses imposed upon it by the flight and ground loads without any permanent deformation. Any repair made must accept the stresses, carry them across the repair, and then transfer them back into the original structure. These stresses are considered as flowing through the structure, so there must be a continuous path for them, with no abrupt changes in cross-sectional areas along the way. Abrupt changes in cross-sectional areas of aircraft structure that are subject to cycle loading/stresses will result in stress concentration that may induce fatigue cracking and eventual failure. A scratch or gouge in the surface of a highly-stressed piece of metal will cause a stress concentration at the point of damage.

a. Multirow Fastener Load Transfer. When multiple rows of rivets are used to secure a lap joint, the transfer of stresses is not equal in each row. The transfer of stress at each row of rivets may be thought of as transferring the maximum amount capable of being transferred without experiencing rivet shear failure.

b. Use Of Stacked Doublers. A stacked doubler is composed of two or more sheets of material that are used in lieu of a single, thicker sheet of material. Because the stress transferred at each row of rivets is dependent upon the maximum stress that can be transferred by the rivets in that row, the thickness of the sheet material at that row need only be thick enough to transfer the stress applied. Employing this principle can reduce the weight of a repair joint.

4-39.—4-49. [RESERVED.]