DOT Inspector General Recognizes Boeing Employees For Help In Solving Federal Cases

A specialized group of Boeing employees recently was recognized by the United States Department of Transportation, Office of the Inspector General, for "outstanding leadership and support to law enforcement in the fight against unapproved aircraft parts."

An "unapproved" spare part is one that lacks airworthiness certification by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, and may have been manufactured or repaired outside of legal, regulatory-approved processes.

"This is an outstanding example of government and industry working together to help solve a problem," said Kenneth Mead, inspector general of the Department of Transportation.

Seven investigation specialists staff the Unapproved Parts Office at Boeing. Randy Milne, a former FBI agent, heads the office.

"We're extremely proud of this recognition from the inspector general," Milne said. "This represents just one of the ways The Boeing Company exercises vigilance in the pursuit of safety far beyond our factory walls."

The primary job of Milne's staff is to assist federal agencies in identifying and locating unapproved spare airplane parts, and to help those agencies with investigations and prosecution. In addition to the DOT Inspector General's office, Boeing provides assistance to the FAA, FBI and Department of Defense investigative units.

Since its inception in 1994, the Unapproved Parts Office has been involved in more than 500 investigations. Some have led to convictions and prison time for individuals engaged in producing and selling illegal spare parts to airlines and maintenance providers.

"Although the number of 'bad guys' engaged in this practice is small, and the impact on the performance of a given jetliner is generally minimal, Boeing is committed to eliminating even the slightest risk to flight safety," Milne said.

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