

Survey Spotlight

Stupid Is As Stupid Does

By AMC(AW) Mike Malley

Many people recognize Forest Gump's words, and I often repeat them when someone does an unsafe act, skips a procedural step, or doesn't use a manual. Unfortunately, such simple maintenance errors are forming a trend that could damage equipment, lead to injury, or kill.

In my short career, poor maintenance practices and shortcuts used to be the exception, not the rule, but I can see that situation changing. How did we let this happen? I think it leads back to one simple fact: a lack of proper training and supervision. During safety surveys, I often find evidence to support that point, especially in the area of pre-op inspections on support equipment, IMRL gear, and shop equipment.

In the last 16 surveys, I have found 10 commands with a wide range of discrepancies—most had problems with tire-inflator kits and NAN carts. I often find these nine common discrepancies:

- Overpressurization bleed valves have missing petcocks (butterfly valves).
- Tire inflator kits have missing or unreadable calibration stickers.
- Tire valve-stem adaptors are missing the Teflon O-ring or valve core (P/N 1000-22).
- Pressure gauges are damaged from an impact or from being dragged across the flight line or deck.
- Inflator-assembly kits or NAN carts have pre-op inspections that were incomplete, "pencil whipped," or not done.
- Pre-op inspections are not entered on OpNAV 4790/52 Cards.
- Inflator assemblies are not calibrated for the type aircraft or have the wrong pop-off pressure.
- Inflator-assembly cases are not marked with the

type aircraft, wheel assembly, and operating pressures.

- NAN-2 cart bins are full of FOD.

During my last visit, the squadron did not do pre-op inspections, had an unqualified airman sign the "inspected by" block on OpNav 4790/52 cards, and didn't do accurate tool inventories. I also found a tool that was missing pieces, a voided calibration sticker on the pressure gauge, tools that had been used on aircraft before flight and not documented, and technicians who were unfamiliar with equipment and maintenance policies and procedures. These discrepancies would cause severe heartburn in any maintenance department.

When maintainers do pre-ops from memory, I become edgy. When I ask for the pre-op cards and shop personnel have to search for them or make up excuses for why they're not available, I become suspicious.

Supervisors, maintenance CPOs, and program managers never must allow maintainers to ignore basic maintenance procedures. If we become soft or turn a blind eye, we are setting up everyone for failure. 

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An uncalibrated tire inflator assembly is dangerous.

For more info...

Periodic maintenance requirements for the tire inflator kit, P/N M85352/1 and dual chuck stem gauge, P/N M85352/4, are located in NavAir 17-600-174-6-2, and the pre-operational checklist is NavAir 17-600-174-6-1. These MRCs should be accessible and used by all qualified tire-and-wheel technicians.

