

UNAPPROVED PARTS NOTIFICATION

SUSPECTED UNAPPROVED PARTS PROGRAM OFFICE, AVR-20
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U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

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No. 2002-00044
July 1, 2002

Published by: FAA, AIR-140, P.O. Box 26460, Oklahoma City, OK 73125

AFFECTED ACCESSORY

Emergency inflatable life rafts.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this notification is to advise all aircraft owners, operators, maintenance organizations, manufacturers, and parts distributors regarding the improper maintenance that C&M Marine, Inc., performed on emergency inflatable life rafts.

BACKGROUND

Information received during a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) suspected unapproved parts investigation revealed that C&M Marine, Inc. (C&M), a former FAA-certificated repair station (Air Agency Certificate No. SX1R496K), located at 4585-C Claire Chennault, Addison, TX 75001, improperly maintained and approved for return to service emergency inflatable life rafts. C&M was previously authorized to repair, inspect, pack, and overhaul emergency inflatable survival equipment (rafts, vests, and escape slides); repair and leak-test oxygen masks, oxygen bottle/cylinders, and fire extinguisher bottle/cylinders; inspect and test Emergency Locator Transmitters and batteries; and repair seat belts and shoulder harnesses.

Evidence indicates that C&M did not perform maintenance on life rafts in accordance with the current manufacturers' maintenance manuals or other data approved by the Administrator. C&M returned to service life rafts with improper seam leak repairs in which a manufacturer's prescribed air retention test had not been met. Evidence also indicates that during the period January to March 2000, C&M falsified entries on work orders attesting to work allegedly performed.

One life raft manufacturer observed the following non-conformities and discrepancies in C&M's procedures when servicing the manufacturer's life rafts:

- (1) Tangled sea anchor line packed between folds.
- (2) Expired survival equipment items not replaced.
- (3) Damaged survival equipment items installed.
- (4) Life raft packed with incomplete survival equipment.
- (5) Water-activated battery (manufactured in January 1976) installed.
- (6) Protective foam not installed over inflation system.
- (7) Valise laces not trimmed after life raft sizing operation.
- (8) Life raft canopy not properly arranged.
- (9) Broken life raft oars.

RECOMMENDATION

Aircraft owners, operators, maintenance organizations, manufacturers, and parts distributors should inspect their aircraft, aircraft records, and/or parts inventories for emergency inflatable life rafts maintained or approved for return to service by C&M. Verification should be conducted independently of information provided on any work order or return-to-service entry. You should take appropriate action if any of these life

rafts have been installed in an aircraft. If any existing inventory includes these life rafts, the FAA recommends that you quarantine the equipment to prevent installation on an aircraft until a determination can be made regarding each life raft's eligibility for installation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information concerning this investigation and guidance regarding the above-referenced life rafts may be obtained from the FAA Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) given below. The FAA would appreciate any information concerning the discovery of the above-referenced equipment from any source, the means used to identify the source, and the action taken to remove the item from service.

This notice originated from the Dallas FSDO, 3300 Love Field Drive, Dallas, TX 75235, telephone (214) 902-1800, fax (214) 902-1872; and was published through the FAA Suspected Unapproved Parts Program Office, AVR-20, telephone (703) 661-0580, fax (703) 661-0113.