

Whistleblower reports Boeing lost hundreds of bad 737 parts

- A Monitor Desk Report

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New York: A quality inspector has alleged that Boeing lost track of hundreds of faulty parts - and some may be on Max 737 aircrafts that have become a focus of safety concerns.

The claims were presented in a June 11 complaint by Boeing inspector Sam Mohawk with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. His statements have since been made public by a memo to members by a Senate subcommittee. That committee is set to hear testimony later Tuesday about the Boeing's manufacturing process, which has faced federal investigations after a series of high-profile mishaps.

The complaint claimed that Boeing had lost hundreds of faulty aircraft parts in the 737 program and deleted records for many of the parts from a cataloging system. The damaged or inadequate parts, referred to as non-conforming parts, are supposed to be tracked and disposed of to

make sure they are not used in aircraft production.

However, Mohawk reportedly claimed that the company “intentionally hid” the improperly stored parts from the Federal Aviation Administration during one onsite inspection.

Boeing has said it is reviewing the claims after receiving the document.

“We continuously encourage employees to report all concerns as our priority is to ensure the safety of our airplanes and the flying public,” Boeing said in a statement to the media.

The whistleblower alleged around 60 parts were being improperly stored outdoors, with Boeing ordering employees to move most of them to another location after the FAA issued them a June 2023 notice that it would be doing an inspection.

He additionally claims the parts were eventually moved back outdoors or became “lost completely.”

Mohawk alleged his job of handling nonconforming parts became way more demanding after all 737 Max’s were grounded amidst the two deadly crashes in 2018 and 2019, and subsequently returned to production after the FAA gave the go-ahead.

He claimed that “the overwhelming number of nonconforming parts eventually led his superiors to direct him and others to eliminate or ‘cancel’ the records that designate a part as nonconforming,” the memo stated.

He further alleged after trying to raise his concerns through Boeing’s internal reporting system named ‘Speak Up,’ his report was eventually directed back to the same managers he complained about.

Mohawk’s allegations were released by the Senate’s Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, the very same day that Boeing CEO David Calhoun was set to appear before Congress. Calhoun’s hearing was expected to include lawmakers pressing him on the company’s plans to address their manufacturing issues.

Boeing has been under intense scrutiny ever since a door plug blew off mid-air out of a 737 Max plane during an Alaska Airlines flight in January. While no one was injured, the National Transportation Safety

Board and the FAA both said they are conducting separate investigations.

The subcommittee memo stated that “documents and accounts provided by whistleblowers familiar with Boeing’s production at facilities in Washington state and Charleston, South Carolina, paint a troubling picture of a company that prioritizes speed of manufacturing and cutting costs over ensuring the quality and safety of aircraft.”

“These misplaced priorities appear to contribute to a safety culture that insufficiently values and addresses the root causes of employee concerns and insufficiently deters retaliation against employees that speak up,” the memo added.

The FAA said in a statement, according to media, that it has encouraged “anyone with safety concerns to report them.”

“We thoroughly investigate every report, including allegations uncovered in the Senate’s work,” the statement added.

Mohawk is one of the latest in a string of Boeing whistleblowers who have raised other concerns about the company’s manufacturing, and two men who publicly spoke out against the troubled company died in recent months.

Last month, the family of one of the deceased Boeing whistleblowers said that they hold the aircraft manufacturer responsible for his death, even if the company had not “pulled the trigger.”

John Barnett, 62, a quality control engineer at Boeing for 32 years, died by suicide in March. At the time, he was testifying in a lawsuit against the aircraft manufacturer.

Joshua Dean, who worked as a quality auditor at Spirit AeroSystems, died earlier this month, according to his family. The 45-year-old, who had an active lifestyle and was believed to be in good health, passed away in hospital following the onset of a fast-moving infection.

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