

INFORMATION: Flyable Crack Limits in Primary Structures,
ANM-100 letter dated March 8, 1983

MAR 31, 1983

Leroy A. Keith ANM-110
Manager, Aircraft Certification Division, ANM-100

Manager, Aircraft Maintenance Division, AWS-300

We have received feedback from field maintenance personnel that our subject letter has caused confusion. The confusion stems from the statement that an airplane should not be flown with a known crack unless an AD has been issued to assure an acceptable level of safety. Evidently, the inspectors are interpreting this as meaning the existing practice of operating with and repairing cracks in accordance with manufacturer or FAA instructions is to be discontinued. This was not intended. That practice has worked well. To discontinue it would be extremely burdensome on the operators.

The point: we were trying to make is that there is no change in the way we handle cracks in primary structures. We are concerned that the growing trend of manufacturers publishing critical crack lengths determined by damage tolerance methods could be construed as approving airplanes to be flown, with no repair or engineering assessment, with known cracks as long as the cracks do not exceed the critical crack length. This is not the case. Cracks in primary structures must be dealt with when they are discovered.

We hope this will clarify any confusion our previous letter may have caused.

Original signed by
H.A. Parker