

Memo from Chris Heintz

To: Zodiac builders and pilots

Date: April 24, 2008

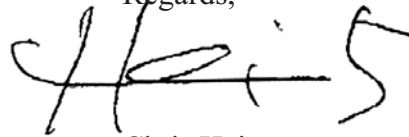
Subject: Czech Aircraft Works CH 601 XL S-LSA accident on April 7, 2008, NTSB Identification NYC08FA158.

I have read the preliminary NTSB report (NYC08FA158) for the recent accident involving a Czech-built Zodiac XL S-LSA en-route to Sun'n Fun. I am carefully considering every finding. Clearly, the most critical technical area of concern at the moment is the apparent failure of the lower spar cap on an aircraft that was seemingly flying well below its gross weight; a secondary concern is the position of the aileron trim which appears to have been fully deflected at the time of the accident.

The Czech-built Zodiac XL (by Czech Aircraft Works) was re-designed and built lighter than its U.S. counterpart to meet European ultralight rules. As can be deduced from its report, the NTSB is now investigating the metallurgy of the spar caps. We need to know if there was a substitution of materials, or if the called-for materials were of sub-standard quality. It must be emphasized that all aluminum parts (including spars) supplied by Zenith Aircraft Co. and by Zenair Ltd. are manufactured from North American-made raw materials. We demand material specification certificates for every batch of aluminum received, and Zenair has these certificates on file dating back more than 20 years. The source and quality of materials used in foreign-built aircraft is not known to me at this time.

There is little we can do until we know the final results of the NTSB investigation. The Safety Board is taking this investigation very seriously as it involves a production S-LSA and not an amateur-built kitplane. Let me assure everyone that Zenair is in close contact with the NTSB on this matter, and that if anything is discovered that could affect the safety of the Zodiac fleet, we will be notified immediately, and in turn inform Zenith builders and owners through the Zenith Aircraft and Zenair websites as well as the Zenair Newsletter.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heintz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chris Heintz,
Designer.