U.S. Department of Transportation
**Federal Aviation Administration**

# Advisory Circular

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| **Subject: VOLUNTARY INDUSTRY DISTRIBUTOR ACCREDITATION PROGRAM** | **Date: 6/13/02**<br>**Initiated By: AFS-300** | **AC No: 00-56A**<br>**Change:** |

**1. PURPOSE.** This advisory circular (AC) describes a system for the accreditation of civil aircraft parts distributors on the basis of voluntary industry oversight and provides information that may be used for developing accreditation programs. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) strongly endorses participation in such a program to improve the ability of certificated persons to establish the eligibility of parts and products for installation on type-certificated products. This AC has been revised in order to meet current changes in regulatory requirements and industry practices since its original publication.

**2. CANCELLATION.** AC 00-56, Voluntary Industry Distributor Accreditation Program, dated September 5, 1996 will be canceled 30 days after the issuance of AC 00-56A. All distributors seeking initial or renewal accreditation shall comply with the requirements listed in AC 00-56A, 30 days after the issuance of this document. Distributors that are already identified in the database of accredited distributors under AC 00-56 may maintain their accreditation until they are renewed, canceled, or removed in accordance with AC 00-56A. However, they may not exceed the 24-month requirement under which they were accredited.

**3. RELATED READING MATERIALS.** The information contained in this AC complements the documents listed below.

**a.** Copies of current editions of the publications listed below, as amended, may be obtained free of charge from the following address: U.S. Department of Transportation, Subsequent Distribution Center, Ardmore East Business Center, 3341 Q 75th Avenue, Landover, MD 20785.

**(1)** AC 20-62, Eligibility, Quality, and Identification of Aeronautical Replacement Parts, contains guidance and information regarding the eligibility of aeronautical parts and materials to be installed on U.S. type-certificated products.

**(2)** AC 21-20, Supplier Surveillance Procedures, contains guidance and information on how production approval holders establish surveillance procedures over suppliers.

**(3)** AC 21-29, Detecting and Reporting Suspected Unapproved Parts, contains guidance and information regarding the detection and reporting of suspected unapproved parts.

**(4)** AC 21-38, Disposition of Unsalvageable Aircraft Parts and Materials, contains guidelines for the proper disposal of unsalvageable parts and/or materials.

**(5)** AC 21.303-2, Announcement of Availability: Parts Manufacturer Approvals, provides information concerning how to obtain a listing of parts manufacturer approvals.

**(6)** AC 43-9, Maintenance Records, provides information regarding maintenance record requirements under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) Parts 43 and 91, sections 43.9, 43.11, and 91.173, and the related responsibilities of owners, operators, and persons performing maintenance, preventive maintenance, and alterations on U.S. type-certificated products and their component parts.

**(7)** FAA Order 8110.42, Parts Manufacturer Approval Procedures, contains guidance and information on how to obtain parts manufacturer approval.

**(8)** FAA Order 8130.21, Procedures for Completion and Use of FAA Form 8130-3, Airworthiness Approval Tag, contains guidance and information on the proper completion of Form 8130-3.

**NOTE: Copies of Advisory Circulars and FAA Orders may also be available through the FAA web site at: http://www.airweb.faa.gov/rgl.**

**b.** Current editions of the ACs listed below, as amended, may be purchased from the following address: New Orders, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954. Tel: (202) 512-1800 (Order Desk).

**(1)** AC 20-36, Index of Articles (Materials, Parts, Processes and Appliances) Certified Under the Technical Standard Order System, lists the materials, parts, and appliances for which the Administrator has received statements of conformance under the Technical Standard Order (TSO) system.

**(2)** AC 21-2, Export Airworthiness Approval Procedures, contains the special airworthiness requirements that have been provided to the FAA by foreign Civil Aviation Authorities (CAA).

**(3)** AC 43-16, Aviation Airworthiness Alerts, is issued monthly and prepared from information submitted by persons who operate and maintain civil aeronautical products, and can be acquired free of charge on the Internet at http://afs600.faa.gov. Under "Designee Standardization (640)," click on "(AC 43-16)."

**4. DEFINITIONS.** For the purpose of this AC, the following definitions apply:

**a. Accreditation Organization.** An organization that audits the quality system of a distributor to determine whether it conforms to a quality system standard recognized by the FAA. The Accreditation Organization must meet the rules and requirements established by the Quality System Standard Organization that maintains the quality system standard. The Accreditation Organization operates as an agency of the Quality System Standard Organization for the purposes of FAA oversight.

**b. Distributors.** Any person engaged in the sale or transfer of parts for installation in appliances and type-certificated aircraft, aircraft engines, or propellers.

**c. Distributor Accreditation.** An Accreditation Organization's recognition that a distributor's Quality System complies with the standards set forth in a Quality System Standard Organization.

**d. Quality System.** The total network of administrative and technical data and detailed procedures required to maintain the product and parts thereof to specified airworthiness standards. In addition, refers to the distributor's total network of administrative and detailed procedures implemented to ensure that the parts sold by the distributor satisfy the customer's aviation quality requirements and, in particular, that the parts documentation accurately reflects the criteria identified in the purchase order.

**e. Quality System Standards.** Criteria developed by various organizations that provide a means to ensure that the distributor's quality system provides an acceptable level of control as delineated in this AC.

**f. Quality System Standard Organization.** An organization that has developed a quality system standard that has been reviewed and accepted by the Administrator. A list of Quality System Standard Organizations, and their applicable Quality System Standards, can be found in paragraph 7.

**g. Self-Evaluation.** A program that the distributor applies to its quality system in order to evaluate compliance with the applicable Quality System Standard as well as with the distributor's own written quality system.

**h. Traceability.** The ability to track parts, processes, and materials to the original manufacturer or other acceptable source to meet the requirements of the installer or in accordance with the Documentation Matrix in Appendix 1.

**5. BACKGROUND.**

**a.** In 1993, the FAA Associate Administrator for Regulation and Certification strongly endorsed the voluntary industry oversight of distributors of civil aircraft parts rather than mandatory federal regulation of those entities. A Task Force was created comprised of representatives from the following organizations: FAA Aircraft Maintenance, Production, and

Airworthiness Divisions; Aerospace Industries; Aeronautical Repair Station, Air Transport, Aircraft Electronics, Airline Pilots, Airline Suppliers, Aviation Distributors and Manufacturers, Experimental Aircraft, General Aviation Manufacturers, National Air Transportation and National Business Aircraft Associations; and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Union. The task force prepared for the FAA's consideration a draft AC on industry oversight of distributors, and in 1996 the FAA published AC 00-56, Voluntary Industry Distributor Accreditation Program, which formally established third party accreditation of distributors. This program was developed in an effort to provide owners and operators of aircraft with a readily available source of materials and parts for which acceptability can be determined without adding an undue economic burden or using limited FAA resources.

**b.** Third party accreditation programs involve having an independent entity, other than the distributor and purchaser, provide a quality system standard that describes acceptable quality system elements which are subsequently audited for adherence to that standard. An accredited distributor, in accordance with this AC, will have a quality system in place that provides customers with documentation that will assist in the customer's determination of the part's eligibility for installation on type certificated products.

**c.** Distributors are an important source of supply for air agencies, commercial operators, and private aircraft owners and operators. The FAA does not directly regulate distributors. However, accreditation of a distributor's quality system by a third-party accreditation program conveys an assurance that the parts a customer receives are of the quality stated, the appropriate documentation is on file at the distributor's place of business, and the distributor is able to maintain the quality system

**d.** In evaluating a potential non-compliance with the regulations, it is the FAA's policy to consider the respondent's use of sound safety practices. The FAA considers that obtaining parts through accredited distributors is a sound safety practice and would be given full consideration during any evaluation of a potential violation of the regulations and voluntary reports. If a certificated entity uses an accredited distributor, and voluntarily reports the potential violation of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR), the fact that the certificate holder obtained the part from an accredited distributor will be considered as mitigating circumstances in any subsequent administrative or enforcement action.

**6. QUALITY SYSTEM ELEMENTS.** There are a variety of quality systems that can be used to ensure that documentation provided by the distributor accurately reflects the installer's requirements to determine whether the parts are acceptable for installation on U.S. type-certificated products. For the distributor's quality system to be found acceptable to the Administrator, the distributor's quality system will be evaluated by the FAA to ensure that it meets all of the elements of this AC and applicable Quality Standards. Quality System Standards that have been found acceptable are listed in paragraph 7. The following elements constitute the minimum acceptable criteria for an accredited distributor's quality system:

**a.** Receiving inspection procedures that ensure that procured material, components, and documentation are traceable to a prior source and bear acceptable documentation that conforms to at least one of the installer's requirements listed in Appendix 1.

**b.** A system for training personnel to ensure that the quality system is properly executed, including the elements that make up the individual's job assignment.

**c.** Administrative procedures that provide for the identification and qualifications of all employees that are authorized to make quality determinations, and assures that all such employees are qualified and properly trained.

**d.** A procedure for segregation of incoming discrepant material.

**e.** Measuring equipment control that provides for appropriate storage, usage, and calibration when such equipment is required.

**f.** A shelf-life control system that assures that the quality and technical criteria are met for each part stocked that is identified as having shelf life.

**g.** A system for assuring that technical data, when required, is maintained in a manner that ensures such data is current and accessible.

**h.** Inspection stamp control that ensures control for issuance, usage, re-issuance, loss of, and accountability (when applicable).

**i.** Packaging control that ensures parts shipped are adequately protected from damage and/or deterioration.

**j.** Environmental controls to ensure parts that require special environments are identified and stored accordingly.

**k.** A procedure for assuring accountability when approval tags or other traceability documents are duplicated.

**l.** A procedure for documenting redistribution of lots. Appropriate documentation would include, but not be limited to, lot and batch control, as well as control and verification of remaining inventory. The procedures should also include control and maintenance of all documentation.

**m.** Procedures for maintaining documentation include, but are not limited to, the documents originally received with the parts being sold and shipped; the documents shipped with the parts; and any other documents used to establish the condition and origin of parts received and shipped.

**n.** A procedure for monitoring the effectiveness of the distributor's quality system, including a self-evaluation program that identifies the individual(s) within the company responsible for self-audits, specifies the frequency of audits, identifies the applicable quality system standard, defines adequate records that must be created to document the audit, and describes a procedure for addressing corrective action where necessary.

**o.** A recall control system that ensures recall notification can be adequately circulated to appropriate parts that have been shipped.

**p.** A system for notifying the Accreditation Organization prior to implementation of any significant changes to the distributor's quality system, as determined by the Accreditation Organization.

**q.** A system for hazardous material control and transport that meets the requirements of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations (49 CFR).

**7. ACCEPTABLE QUALITY SYSTEM STANDARDS.** The following organizations have quality system standards considered acceptable for distributors of civil aeronautical parts to be installed in type-certificated products.

| ORGANIZATION | STANDARD | TITLE |
|---|---|---|
| Aviation Suppliers Association (ASA)<br>http://www.aviationsuppliers.org | ASA-100 | Quality System Standard |
| American National Standards Institute (ANSI)<br>25 West 43rd St.<br>New York, NY 10036<br>Tel. No. (212) 642-4900 | ISO 9000 Series | Quality Management and Quality Systems Elements Guidelines |
| General Aviation Parts Suppliers Association (GAPSA)<br>4180 W. Kitty Hawk<br>Chandler, AZ 85226<br>Tel. No. (800) 366-6462 | GAPSA 100 | Program Quality System Guidelines |
| Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE)<br>400 Commonwealth Drive<br>Warrendale, PA 15096-0001<br>Tel. No. (412) 776-4841 | NADCAP AS 7103 | Requirements for Accreditation of Pass Through Distributors |
| | NADCAP AS 7104 | Requirements for Accreditation of Full Distributors |
| Transonic Aviation Consultants, Inc.<br>PO Box 15431<br>Plantation, FL 33318<br>Tel. No. (954) 327-3057<br>Fax. (954) 327-3321 | TAC 2000 | Aeronautical Parts Distributor Quality Assurance Standard |

**CAUTION: Quality organizations' contact information may change.**

**8. ACCREDITATION ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITIES.**

**a.** Accreditation Organizations shall have operating procedures that adequately address all elements of an effective accreditation program, to include audit review procedures, auditor qualifications, auditor training, internal auditing, issuance and withdrawal or reinstatement of certificates, internal document control, and appeals.

**b.** Accreditation Organizations are responsible for auditing distributors to ensure compliance with both the requirements of their respective quality system standards (paragraph 6) and all the requirements set forth in this AC.

**c.** Accreditation Organizations shall have procedures to enable them to periodically monitor the effectiveness of the distributor's quality system.

**d.** Auditors utilized by an Accreditation Organization should have one of the following qualifications:

**(1)** Certification as an auditor by the American Society for Quality;

**(2)** Training as an auditor by the Coordinating Agency for Supplier Evaluation (C.A.S.E.);

**(3)** Training as an auditor by the National Aerospace and Defense Contractors Accreditation Program, or certification as an auditor by the International Organization for Standardization;

**(4)** Past professional experience as a quality auditor for an air carrier, repair station, air agency, or under a distributor accredited under **AC 00-56A**, Voluntary Industry Distributor Accreditation Program; and/or

**(5)** Past work as a FAA Aviation Safety Inspector with auditing experience.

**e.** If the distributor is in compliance with the selected quality system standard and all elements of this AC, the Accreditation Organization shall provide the distributor with a letter certifying compliance to both.

**f.** An accredited distributor under **AC 00-56A** shall be audited to the complete Acceptable Quality System Standard chosen at least once every 36 months with, at a minimum, one surveillance audit during the 36-month term to continue to participate in the voluntary industry accreditation program. Any letter certifying compliance with standards of **AC 00-56A** shall become invalid on the third anniversary of such certification, but this will not affect the letter's validity with respect to any other certifications made.

## 9. ARRANGING AN AUDIT.

**a.** Distributors desiring accreditation should contact one of the Accreditation Organizations that are authorized to audit to one of the acceptable Quality System Standards listed in paragraph 7.

**b.** The distributor subsequently makes the necessary arrangements with the Accreditation Organization to have its quality system audited to the appropriate quality standard, the guidelines in this AC, and additional elements described in the distributor's own operating procedures manual.

**c.** The distributor bears all costs associated with the accreditation process.

## 10. TYPICAL ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES.

**a.** Accreditation becomes effective when the distributor is listed in the Voluntary Industry Distributor Accreditation Program database. The FAA has designated the Aviation Suppliers Association as the database manager. The database is available on the Internet at http://www.aviationsuppliers.org.

**b.** In order to be added to the database, the distributor shall send to the database manager, by mail or by any private or commercial interstate carrier, a letter certifying that the distributor has passed an audit by an Accreditation Organization. The distributor's certification letter (Appendix 2) shall be accompanied by a copy of the signed certification from the Accreditation Organization. The distributor shall keep a copy of the registered certification letter on file until the next accreditation. Distributors shall send their certification letter to the Aviation Suppliers Association by accessing http://www.aviationsuppliers.org to obtain their current address, fax number, and phone number.

**(1)** The distributor's certification letter shall contain the following information:

**(a)** Company name.

**(b)** Address.

**(c)** Management official who is the company's point of contact.

**(d)** Phone number.

**(e)** A certification statement by a senior management official that the distributor will maintain and continue to follow their quality system as approved by the Accreditation Organization.

**(2)** The distributor's certification letter shall be accompanied by a copy of the signed certificate from the Accreditation Organization indicating that the distributor has successfully passed an audit and that the distributor's quality system met the requirements and standards of **AC 00-56A** and the following standard **[listed quality standard]** on **[date]**. The certificate shall indicate the date on which the accreditation expires.

**c.** The database manager will publish via the Internet the information contained in paragraphs 10b(1)(a)-(d) and b(2) within two business days after receipt of a properly completed certification statement.

**d.** Because accreditation under this program is for a period not to exceed 36 months, the date on which the certification expires shall be the three-year anniversary of the issue date of the certification, unless the expiration date listed on the certificate is sooner.

**e.** The database manager will remove the information from the database within two business days from the date that the certification expires, or upon notification from an Accreditation Organization that it has revoked a distributor's certification or that the certificate has been surrendered.

**f.** Once the database manager has published this information on the Internet, the distributor is considered to be accredited and may provide this information to its customers. This information should be in the form of the following statement:

> **[Company Name]** certifies that we are an accredited distributor meeting the **[listed quality standard]** and the provisions of **AC 00-56A**. (Followed by a management signature from the distributor organization.)

**11. DISTRIBUTORS LISTED IN THE C.A.S.E. REGISTER.** The FAA Continuous Airworthiness Maintenance Division, AFS-300, has approved the use of the C.A.S.E. program for the evaluation and surveillance of distributors utilized by the sustaining C.A.S.E. member air carriers.

**12. DISTRIBUTORS APPROVED BY CAAs THAT HAVE A BILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH THE FAA THAT INCLUDES MAINTENANCE IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES.** The FAA has determined that if a country has a Bilateral Agreement with the FAA that includes Maintenance Implementation Procedures, and that country's CAA regulates distributors, then that country may request that the FAA consider such regulated distributors to meet the requirements of this AC, and be eligible to be listed in the database of accredited distributors. The FAA shall determine on a case-by-case basis if the regulatory standards imposed on the foreign distributor are equivalent to the criteria delineated in this AC. The CAA's request shall be submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration, Flight Standards Service, Continuous Airworthiness Maintenance Division, AFS-300, 800 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20591. Tel: (202) 267-3546; Fax: (202) 267-5115. If the FAA grants the request, then foreign distributors regulated by that CAA may be listed in the database of accredited distributors as long as they have met the documentation and certification requirements of paragraph 10(b)(1-2) and include in the mailing a copy of the certificate from the CAA.

**13. ACCREDITATION TERM.** The term of accreditation and renewal of accreditation will be in accordance with procedures contractually established by the Quality System Standard Organization and the distributor; however, the maximum term for distributor accreditation under this AC shall be for 36 months with, at a minimum, one surveillance audit during the 36-month term.

**14. PROGRAM MONITORING.** The FAA's Continuous Airworthiness Maintenance Division, AFS-300, and the Production and Airworthiness Division, AIR-200, will jointly monitor the effectiveness of this program by participating with and/or conducting assessments of the accrediting organizations and distributors on a periodic basis as deemed necessary by the FAA. When a new Quality Systems Standards is added, the Accreditation Organization will notify the FAA prior to performing the first five audits, and the FAA may at their option

accompany the auditor on these audits. Point of contact is AFS-300. Tel: (202) 267-3546; Fax: (202) 267-5115.

**15. COMMENTS INVITED.** Any proposed changes to this AC should be directed to the Federal Aviation Administration, Flight Standards Service, Continuous Airworthiness Maintenance Division, AFS-300, 800 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20591. Tel: (202) 267-3546; Fax: (202) 267-5115.

for James J. Ballough
Director, Flight Standards Service

# APPENDIX 1. DOCUMENTATION MATRIX

| CLASS OF PART | REQUIRED ON RECEIPT | REQUIRED FOR SHIPMENT |
|---|---|---|
| Raw Materials | Physical & chemical properties reports traceable to heat code or lot number | Certification that test reports are on file |
| Standard parts as in 14 CFR section 21.303(b)(4) | Certificate of Conformity (C of C) from producer | Certification that C of C is on file |
| New parts, products, and appliances with regulatory airworthiness approval documents | FAA Form 8130-3, JAA Form One, TC 24-0078, or other regulatory airworthiness approval documents from nations that have signed bilateral agreements with the United States | Certified true copy of the regulatory airworthiness approval document |
| New parts, products, and appliances without regulatory airworthiness approval documents, including new Parts Manufacturer Approval or Technical Standard Order Authorization parts identified only through markings (in accordance with 14 CFR Part 21 and Part 45) | Certified statement from seller as to identity and condition | Statement as to identity and condition and that original certified statement is on file |
| Used parts, products, and appliances with approval for return to service | Approval for return to service meeting provisions of 14 CFR sections 43.9, 43.11, or 43.17 | Approval for return to service attached to part, product, or appliance |
| Used parts, products, and appliances without approval for return to service | Certified statement from seller as to identity and condition – must use "as is" or comparable term to describe condition | Statement as to identity and condition and that original certified statement is on file - must use "as is" or comparable term to describe condition |

# APPENDIX 2. SAMPLE DATABASE LETTER

**[Date]**

**[Company Name]**
**[Company Address]**
**[Phone Number]**
**[Fax Number]**

**[Point of Contact]**

Dear Database Manager,

As management official of **[Company Name]** I hereby certify that:

a) Only parts for which documentation is on file at this place of business, as delineated in **AC 00-56A**, Appendix 1, will be sold for installation on civil aviation products.

b) **[The Accreditation Organization]** has completed an audit and found our quality system to be in compliance with the provisions of **AC 00-56A** and **[Quality System Standard]** on **[Date]**.

c) A copy of the audit result is on file and available for inspection by any interested person.

_____ _____
Signature Date

**NOTE: The distributor's certification letter shall be accompanied by a copy of the signed certification letter or a certificate from the Accreditation Organization.**

U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

800 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED