

April 15, 2024

U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing you because I have spent the last six years having nightmares on a regular basis in which the 787s we worked on fall out of the sky. I wish to remain anonymous at this time because I'm concerned that management had me do work that was illegal. I worked as an A&P mechanic on the 787s at Boeing South Carolina from May 2012 to January 2018. My previous experience included aviation while on active duty in the Navy.

For approximately 5 years, I was involved in preparing the 46 and 47 fuselage sections. The sections were built from scratch at Boeing and never came to us perfect and needed to be filled and/or sanded. They were never the same and always had to be worked on. The specs called for the fuselage connections to be 5x5, which meant that it had to be checked every 5 inches around each stringer. We had to avoid sanding into the carbon fiber, but this could not always be avoided. In addition to the connections, we prepared the door and window openings.

After the first year, management asked for volunteers to become MFPP participants which in the beginning allowed the mechanics to inspect and approve their work or the work of other mechanics. Within a year of becoming an MFPP, we were allowed to inspect and approve our own work.

I have serious concerns with how the MFPP program was conducted. For example, when I checked the work of others on the 46 and 47 sections they usually failed. However, when those same mechanics or their MFPP co-workers inspected their own work, they always passed. Another problem with the MFPP program is that as mechanics, we still had to complete our own work, which left little time for doing the inspections. At the same time, we were pressured by management to sign off on work without actually inspecting it. This happened all the time with regard to the 46 and 47 fuselage sections.

We regularly heard complaints from the mechanics who were tasked with joining the fuselage sections together. For example, they complained that the gaps were too big to fill with shims and needed more filler or to be re-sanded. This was especially a problem with the aft section. We heard that Boeing changed the tolerances based on the failures they were experiencing.

At one point I was hurt on the job doing something I was not trained to do and was placed on light duty. In this time-period I lost my MFPP certification. I was assigned to make the stringers along the inside wall of the fuselages. I had not yet been trained for the stringers and had no idea what was required. As soon as I arrived they gave me back my MFPP and my lead ordered me to buy off the stringers. When I complained that I had no idea what I was looking at, my lead accused me of not being a team player and told me to just sign off on the work. Although I worked a full workload, I was later fired for losing my MFPP. To add insult to injury, they fired me a week after the death of my son.

In general, the Boeing South Carolina plant was run by a good old boy network that played by their own rules. When we raised concerns that the work was not in accordance with the processes and procedures, we were ordered to just do it and told there were hundreds of others waiting in line outside the gate wanting our jobs. As I mentioned previously, I am concerned that management coerced us into engaging in conduct that was illegal, such as approving work that we had not even inspected or that we otherwise had no business approving. It was incredibly stressful, to the point to where I sought psychological help and was diagnosed with PTSD.

As a result of these problems, I have very little confidence that the fuselage sections and stringers were being made in accordance with the specs. It is because of these problems, I will not fly and will not allow my family to fly on a 787 made in Charleston, South Carolina. I am concerned for the flying public and want the FAA or whoever has jurisdiction to investigate and make sure that the 787s are safe despite the fact that they were not properly built or inspected.

Respectfully,

Former Boeing Mechanic