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LETTER TO OWNERS/OPERATORS NO 2146 FOKKER F28 MK 0100 AND MK 0070 AIRCRAFT ELEVATOR AUTO-PILOT SERVO INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE

On the 3 November 2000 a significant loss of pitch control occurred on a UK-registered Fokker F28 Mk 0100 aircraft which is currently the subject of an Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) investigation. During the incident the aircraft levelled out at FL 110 with the auto-pilot engaged for an approach for landing, when it encountered significant pitch oscillation and control problems. Ultimately pilot control was regained with auto-pilots disconnected.

From the Flight Data Recorder analysis, various flight characteristics (including a lack of elevator movement for over 20 seconds) appear symptomatic of a loss of positive drive from the elevator auto-pilot servo. Potential causes of this condition include the following:

- Ice build up on the elevator auto-pilot servo drive cable and capstan
- Insufficient cable tension of elevator auto-pilot servo cable

To make all relevant parties aware of this condition, attention is drawn to Fokker Services documentation on this subject, including Service Experience Digests under ATA Chapter 27-31 and Service Letter 134. It is possible that recommendations may be made to the CAA from the AAIB investigation to mandate embodiment of preventative service bulletins which are currently available. These are currently under review with Fokker and the CAA of the Netherlands.

In the interim, it is strongly recommended that operators, owners and maintenance organisations responsible for F28 Mk 0100 and Mk 0070 aircraft take the following course of action;

- Gain access to the elevator auto-pilot servo area in the bullet fairing to ensure the area is free of moisture and fairing drainage holes are clear.
- For the duration of cold and humid weather conditions, to lubricate both elevator auto-pilot servo capstans i.a.w. Fokker 100 Service Letter 134 dated Jan 15 1993.
- Check both elevator auto-pilot servo cable tension. (Maintenance Manual references 22-11-XX / 20-14-XX should apply).

Enquiries regarding this LTO and reports of any significant findings should be referred to Mr Pete Woollacott, Aircraft Systems Department (Telephone: 01293 573129) at the above address.

RJTEW

Applications and Certification Section