

Australian Ultralight Federation Inc

ARBN 070 931 645

U35/59 Wollongong St

PO Box 1265, Fyshwick ACT 2609

Ph: 02 6280 4700 Fax: 02 6280 4775

Email: tech@auf.asn.au



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XAIR AIRCRAFT - MAINTENANCE ALERT ELEVATOR HINGE BOLT FAILURE

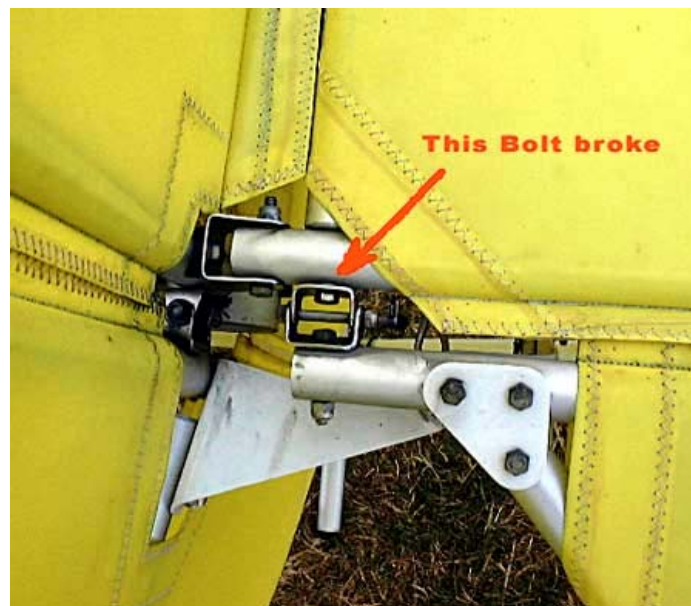
There has been an inflight failure of an elevator hinge bolt

Action Required: *Before next flight, at each servicing and at each instance of abnormal occurrence to the tailplane or elevator, the elevator hinge bolts of all XAIR aircraft are to be inspected for integrity. Any anomaly is cause for replacement.*

Background. Mr Coates of XAIR has forwarded the following to all XAIR owners.

"It has come to my attention in the past few days that there has been a bolt failure in the tail of an X-Air. I am asking all owners both in Australia and overseas to perform a good visual check before next flight.

The bolt which has failed attaches the elevator hinge to the horizontal stabiliser... picture attached for clarification. The bolt broke where the thread finishes and the shaft starts.



The consequences of this bolt failure could have been serious but the pilot managed to land the aircraft about 5 miles away from the failure location without incident. Investigations are continuing into this incident and the Australian Ultralight Federation has been advised of the failure.

Several weeks prior to the failure the aircraft was involved in a major bingle with a fence on that side of the elevator, the impact was sufficient to ruin the fabric covering and deeply scratch the metal tubes which make up the elevator and horizontal stabiliser, it is our belief that this impact has damaged the bolt which went on to fail in flight.

All owners are advised to inspect the hinge bolts which hold on the elevators and rudder BEFORE next flight and report back to me at <mailto:mcoates@mcp.com.au> (info_tech@auf.asn.au) any information which they think will be helpful."

In response to a query on placing it on our AUF website, Mr Coates replied:

"I am happy for it to go onto the website, I must however stress that this is a one off and I believe directly related to the hit the tail took whilst on the trailer being towed... no reports have come back from anywhere of similar breakages although a few guys overseas have found a few loose bolts elsewhere when they did a proper check of their aircraft so it's worth it for that reason alone.

There are a few owners I have not been able to contact..... (holidays or something ?? Phones just dont answer)

I must stress again that the plane which broke took a very hard hit on the tail whilst on the trailer and I believe this is the main reason there is a problem. Reports from all over the world indicate no problems with any other aircraft although two owners in the US have found two loose bolts (not the same one) which they only picked up on this inspection and not on their normal preflight..... so I guess that alone has helped save lives (maybe) "



R Hewitt-Cook
Technical Manager