

**AEROSTAR INTERNATIONAL, INC.  
SERVICE BULLETIN #129**

November 28, 1990

**SUBJECT** Undetectable premature strength loss in AFT suspension cables.

**PROBLEM** An Aerostar Model S-77A recently experienced a failure of AFT cables while preparing for launch in moderate winds.

**DISCUSSION** This failure resulted in the discovery that two field situations exist which are of concern: 1) AFT cables experience a greater than anticipated strength loss in service. 2) Significant damage and strength loss can occur from heat which cannot be detected from external inspection.

**APPLICABILITY** This Service Bulletin applies to all Aerostar (Raven) hot air balloon systems which are currently equipped with AFT cables. These cables can be recognized as either gray or white in color, nonmetallic with the outer surface having a silicone rubber cover.

**CORRECTIVE ACTION** S-66A and S-77A balloons must be removed from service until such time as the AFT cables are removed and the balloon is refitted with steel cable sets. All other models which have 100 hours or more on the aircraft with the cables installed must also be removed from service until such time as the AFT cables are removed and the balloon is refitted with steel cable sets.

All other models with less than 100 hours must be examined for possible overheating. Each cable should be checked to determine whether the gray or white outer sheath is still free to move independently of the inner cable. If not, this indicates that the cables have been exposed to excessive heat and the balloon must be removed from service until such time as the AFT cables are removed and the balloon is refitted with steel cable sets. This examination can be performed as preventative maintenance by the owner/operator.

All other models with less than 100 hours which are examined as above and found to be free of heat damage may remain in service up to the 100 hour point. During that time the cables must be spot checked during each preflight for the above damage as part of the normal examination for damage. Upon reaching the 100 hour point or the next annual inspection, the cables must be removed from service as above.

**PROCEDURE** For those balloons which must be removed from service immediately, contact your nearest dealer to notify them of the cables which are needed. Cables will be shipped with retrofit instructions. Cables may be installed by the owner/operator. Upon completion of the installation the enclosed compliance card must be filled out by the installing person and forwarded with the AFT cables to Aerostar. An entry must be made in the aircraft log book showing compliance with this Service Bulletin.

For persons performing the initial preventative maintenance examination, a maintenance record entry must be made indicating that this examination was performed.

**AEROSTAR™**  
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