



SENT VIA EMAIL & CERTIFIED MAIL

The Foundation for Aviation Safety
1802 Vernon St NW Suite 2213
Washington, DC 20009

April 2, 2025

The Honorable Jennifer L. Homendy
Chair, National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, SW
Washington, DC 20594

Subject: NTSB Preliminary Report

Dear Chair Homendy,

The Foundation for Aviation Safety is monitoring the alarming rate of uncommanded altitude changes resulting in serious injuries to passengers and flight crew. A variety of passenger jets, military aircraft, and private aircraft have exhibited sudden inflight upsets catching pilots by surprise. The causes of these accidents have been attributed to 'clear air turbulence', 'sudden uncommanded movements', 'altitude excursions', 'unknown technical problem' and the like--all seemingly occurring out of the blue.

These in-flight accidents are causing passengers to crash into the cabin ceiling and other fixtures, resulting in multiple serious, life-changing injuries and tragically in a recent accident, a fatality.

Executive Summary

We would like to introduce you to whistleblower Mr. Charles Hoefer. Mr. Hoefer lives in North Dakota and has courageously stepped forward with highly detailed information concerning the illicit manufacturing of Ring Laser Gyros. He has escalated his concerns despite repeated retaliatory actions taken against him by state and local government officials.

We are worried the sudden rise in inflight upsets might be due to potentially defective avionic system parts entering commercial airplane manufacturing and maintenance supply chains. We also believe these parts may have entered military aircraft and weapon systems supply chains.

We are recommending the NTSB immediately investigate this possibility by interviewing Mr. Hoefer. We also believe that law enforcement agents from the DOT and DoD should participate in the interviewing since there appears to be potential criminal wrongdoing.

BACKGROUND

(1) A Possible 'Weak Link' in Commercial Boeing and Airbus Inertial Navigation Systems for Automated Flight Controls:

In April 2022, Mr. Hoefer purchased a vacant factory in Dunseith, North Dakota. It was operated until 2015 by Benchmark Electronics, Inc., a subcontractor to Honeywell International, Inc. aerospace unit. The factory had performed key manufacturing roles for the Honeywell GG1320 Digital Ring Laser Gyroscope. All the aerospace work was supposed to have closed and been removed from the facility and from North Dakota in 2015.

Mr. Hoefer states his factory had been used illicitly from 2016 until his purchase from the government in 2022. This activity was an “off-the-books” shadow factory that repaired, reworked, and inspected GG1320 Digital Ring Laser Gyroscopes.

(i) Mr. Hoefer's evidence (including audio record of Benchmark's lead outside counsel acknowledging this) supports that local community members continued receiving GG1320 components even after his purchase of the 100,000 sq. ft. factory, and after he began reporting to Federal authorities. Mr. Hoefer has records to prove his property address was being framed in the alleged scheme.

(ii) Mr. Hoefer photographed multiple parcels shown to him by courier drivers. These originated from Benchmark's Rochester, Minnesota facility in 2022 and 2023. They were addressed to his address and containing secondary 'ship to' instructions to a tavern. The Rochester factory of Benchmark is where certain critical GG1320 manufacturing activities were relocated in 2015.

(iii) Mr. Hoefer has documented receiving threats from local, state, and federal authorities in North Dakota for making these reports, owing to what he credibly alleges (with documentation and eyewitnesses) are connections of the scheme to government officials there.

(iv) Mr. Hoefer reports that a Homeland Securities Investigation Special Agent, who is presently incarcerated and charged with murder, told him to destroy evidence before it could be lawfully collected by federal authorities. Mr. Hoefer alleges that agents made false reports about his factory after their initial visits and threatened him. Mr. Hoefer alleges serious financial retaliation has occurred against him by members of the racketeering scheme he credibly alleges he uncovered.

(v) Mr. Hoefer reports that he received a federal crime scene declaration for a trailer load of evidence that was concealed in the factory that he provided to federal agents. Later visits from the FAA, FBI, DoD, DCIS, OIG, USAF, OSI, and Army CID appeared to be very secretive. Mr. Hoefer prompted those visits and later collections of the federal evidence after filing North Dakota case no. 40-2023-CV-00048 to compel relief. That lawsuit, which he dismissed after suffering financial retaliation, outlines many, but not all, technical aspects of the alleged GG1320 manufacturing violations.

Mr. Hoefer has begun to release evidence, including downloadable files, through The Dakotan, an independent media group based in Minot, North Dakota (www.mydakotan.com). The Dakotan has tagged this story "The Dunseith Debacle." Other media groups in North Dakota have begun to cover aspects of the alleged scheme, its cover-up, and retaliation against Mr. Hoefer.

18 North Dakota legislators have recently written to North Dakota Governor Kelly Armstrong on Mr. Hoefer's behalf, expressing concerns over the situation.

(2) Sudden Inflight Upsets are Becoming Too Many, Too Severe:

At times, there are more injuries arising from one of these inflight jolts than when an aircraft is written off from a landing mishap:

- (i) For example, the dramatic accident in Toronto of Delta Flight 4819 on February 17, 2025, that resulted in the airplane flipping upside down during landing, resulted in 21 reported hospitalizations, with two severe injuries.
- (ii) By contrast, some of the sudden inflight upsets have seen double the number of hospitalizations and as many as 20-plus serious injuries in a single accident, when compared to Flight 4819.

We believe these inflight accidents, which may destroy a cabin but not an aircraft, must be given urgent attention to discover the root cause(s). We also believe officials within the FAA have been aware of a potential direct cause since early 2023, which no Federal agency has yet made public.

Because aircraft are not destroyed and often continue flying for hours or days following an event there is less attention given to determining root causes. The NTSB may not be aware of the following information.

(3) Sudden Flight Control Failures Long Known to Cause Serious Inflight Upsets:

There is the increasing risk that one of these upsets caused by failures in flight control systems may eventually result in total loss of a large passenger aircraft. We seek to prevent this with today's warning and actionable intelligence.

In 2008, Qantas Flight 72, an Airbus 330, experienced such an upset. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau determined the flight control software incorrectly responded to a faulty inertial reference. That accident sent over 50 people to the hospital, some with serious, life-changing injuries.

In 2024 alone, our Foundation has become aware of dozens of such accidents which look eerily similar to Qantas 72, except the majority involved Boeing aircraft.

Specifically, the Boeing 787 Dreamliner incurs a disproportionately high share of 2024 global inflight accidents, followed by the 777, but a variety of Boeing and Airbus models also exhibit

the problem, with a common issue later described. From these inflight upsets, hundreds of injuries, even death, were reported just in 2024 on Boeing large commercial passenger aircraft.

Multiple 2024 events, which have no obvious weather correlation, resulted in aircraft exhibiting huge deviations from specified flight paths, and higher g-forces from uncommanded movements than Qantas 72, at times with flight issues lingering after the upset.

(4) United Flight 613, 787 Dreamliner Inflight Upset, January 24, 2025:

As you know, on March 18, 2025, the NTSB released its preliminary report of United Flight 613 that made an emergency landing in Nigeria on January 24, 2025, following an event which resulted in many injuries, including serious injuries. United's Boeing 787 Dreamliner experienced a sudden inflight 'excursion', which early on was acknowledged as a 'technical event' and not weather-related.

The NTSB notes in the preliminary report that both Inertial Reference Units (IRUs) failed on that airplane.

“On January 24, 2025, about 00:31 universal coordinated time (UTC), United Airlines (UAL) flight 613, a Boeing 787-8, experienced altitude excursions during cruise flight while transitioning over Cote d’Ivoire airspace at 36,000 feet. Of the 11 crew members and 243 passengers on board, one person sustained a serious injury and 15 people sustained minor injuries. The aircraft sustained minor damage. The flight was operating under the provisions of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 121 as a scheduled international passenger flight from Murtala Muhammed International Airport (LOS), Lagos, Nigeria, to Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD), Dulles, Virginia.

About 1 hour and 5 minutes prior to the event, inflight data showed a left inertial reference unit (IRU) failure. About 55 minutes later, the data indicated a right IRU failure. According to flight data recorder data, at 00:30:57, the autopilot disconnected automatically, the flight crew took over manual control, and the master caution and master warning were recorded. Altitude excursions began at this time. Three seconds later, the autothrottle disconnected. At 00:31:14, a stick shaker activation was recorded. Twenty seconds later the autopilot was reengaged for one second, then disconnected automatically again. At 00:40:30, the airplane started a right turn back toward Lagos. At 00:44:39, the autopilot was reengaged and remained engaged until final approach into LOS.”

(5) An Allegedly Sordid GG1320 Supply Chain and its Correlation to Boeing and Airbus Inertial Reference Errors and Failures:

The GG1320 is the world's most used digital ring laser gyroscope in Western aerospace. The sensor is critical to FAA's qualifications of inertial reference systems in modern Boeing and Airbus aircraft.

These inertial systems are known by many different names depending on the aircraft and its design. GG1320s are critical hardware to Air Data Inertial Reference Units (ADIRU), Inertial Reference Units (IRU), Inertial Reference Systems (IRS), Inertial Navigation Systems (INS), and many other similar names. The GG1320s are essentially the 'brains' of many critical automated aviation controls.

Any compromise(s) within GG1320 manufacturing processes, security controls, testing, traceability or static-safe work environments could have serious consequences in passenger flight. Mr. Hoefer asserts these elements of the GG1230 supply chain have been recently compromised in various ways, affecting tens of thousands of units, almost entirely untraceable. Mr. Hoefer alleges these units now roam as hidden 'gremlins' within passenger jets.

(6) The Foundation for Aviation Safety is Calling for NTSB to Comprehensively Interview Mr. Hoefer, and Review His Evidence:

The Foundation for Aviation Safety believes the body of information already provided to Federal agencies warrants immediate investigation and action by the NTSB.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Ed Pierson
Executive Director



Joe Jacobsen
Deputy Director