

Dear EAA Technical Counselor;

I'm sure you are all aware that there have been a number of accidents involving Zenith CH 601XL and related aircraft in which the aircraft suffered an in-flight structural failure or breakup. This situation has resulted in the FAA's issuance of [Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin](#) (SAIB) CE-10-08 and the release by Aircraft Manufacturing & Design LLC (AMD) of a [safety alert dated November 7th, 2009](#).

Chris Heinz, designer of the CH 601XL and CH 650 aircraft issued a [Question and Answer document](#) addressing the issue in which he urges all owners/operators of these aircraft to comply with the AMD service directive even if they are not required by regulation to do so. The following is a quote from the Q&A document;

"Owners of an SLSA (AMD-built) Zodiac must comply with the factory-issued Safety Alert. Owners of a self-built "Experimental" Zodiac are officially the manufacturer of their aircraft and are therefore technically free to install (or not) the upgrades. As the designer of the aircraft, I am strongly urging all owners who operate their CH 601 XL/CH 650 to install the upgrades now being proposed before the next flight. You, more than anyone, know how damaging and demoralizing the doubts and questions regarding the aircraft have been; how they have affected the confidence that many have in the design. Stronger airplanes and better prepared pilots should help us all restore the reputation and desirability of these airplanes you have put so much of yourself into. If for no other reason, install the "Upgrade Package" to maximize resale value of your project: I anticipate that the cost of the Upgrade will be much lower than the increase in resale value".

EAA urges you to share this info with builders and owners/operators of Zenith CH 601XL and CH 650 in your area. You may also wish to make them aware of the [independent analysis](#) of the design, as well as the [drawings outlining the upgrade](#) outlined in the AMD safety alert. Be sure to remind owners of the SLSA aircraft that they are required to comply with the safety directive. While owners of ELSA and amateur-built versions of the design are not specifically required to comply with the safety directive, you should remind them that they are required to maintain and operate their aircraft in a condition for safe operation and the safety of flight issues pointed out in the safety directive must be addressed in some fashion. Note that Chris Heinz strongly urges owners of experimental versions of the aircraft to install the upgrades. EAA concurs with this recommendation.

You may wish to remind owners of the experimental-certificated aircraft that the safety directive's requirement for an A&P mechanic make the modifications only applies to the SLSA versions of the aircraft. Owners of the experimental aircraft are not bound by this requirement and are free to perform the upgrade themselves. However, you must also remind the owner/builder that these modifications to their experimental aircraft are considered a "major change". The builder will need to follow the major change procedure outlined in their operating limitations in order to return the aircraft to service.

EAA will continue to post updates on this issue on our website, www.eaa.org. Encourage builders, owners and operators of these aircraft to visit the website often for new developments. The current story can be seen [here](#).

Thanks for your continued dedication to your fellow EAA members.

Regards,

Joe Norris
EAA Homebuilders Community Manager