



# THE STANDSGRAM



## DEFERRED MAINTENANCE

By CW5 Kylene Lewis



Can scheduled maintenance actions be deferred? This question arises frequently for maintenance managers across the force. It is particularly important for organizations that deploy aircraft to understand scheduled maintenance inspection tolerance windows and the circumstances under which those intervals may be exceeded. Maintenance leaders must be familiar with AR 750-1 and GEN-24-AMAM-01 to safely and efficiently address overdue scheduled maintenance for aircraft that have been in transit for extended periods of time.

AR 750-1, Army Material Maintenance Policy, defines deferred maintenance as the “authorized delay of maintenance and/or repair of uncorrected faults.” This AR also defines the Army maintenance standard, which addresses scheduled services and states that one of the conditions required for equipment to meet the maintenance standard is “scheduled services are performed at the service interval required by the applicable TM” and “procedures to apply this variance are found in TM 1-1500-328-23 for aviation equipment” (TM 1-1500-328-23 has been superseded by GEN-24-AMAM-01). AR 750-1 defines the maintenance standard and deferred maintenance, but maintenance leaders also need to be familiar with GEN-24-AMAM-01 and associated Addendums to determine what maintenance can be deferred and when it is appropriate to advise commanders to do so.

GEN-24-AMAM-01, Addendum One, says the following concerning scheduled inspections, “Do not exceed the required inspection and/or maintenance action intervals except when an operational emergency exists. Operational emergencies are combat, weather, or environmental, which would require a flight to evacuate aircraft, personnel, or essential equipment. Only commanders can postpone essential maintenance actions during emergency conditions. Evaluate emergency operational extensions on a case-by-case basis since safety may be jeopardized when inspections or maintenance actions are delayed.” Aircraft arriving at a port location (non-combat) with overdue scheduled inspections and maintenance actions do not constitute an operational emergency.

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GEN-24-AMAM-01, Addendum Two, further explains deferred maintenance and allows for evacuation of an aircraft with an X condition. In the case of repairs and part replacement, Addendum Two says, “when there are faults that are labor intensive, but do not affect the safe operation of the aircraft, the repair may be deferred until the next scheduled maintenance inspection.” This is in reference to aligning repairs that are not X conditions with other maintenance actions. This does not apply to deferring the actual scheduled maintenance actions themselves.

Addendum Two also defines and sets conditions for evacuating aircraft with an X condition. “The commander, or designated representative, or an equal management supervisor in a DoD contract maintenance support activity may authorize a one-time evacuation mission for an aircraft with a status of X when the benefits of the evacuation flight outweigh any degree of risk involved.” It further states that the commander may authorize more than one fuel stop and must stop at the first facility that will support the maintenance repairs required. Additionally, “Commanders will not use this authorization to return an aircraft with an X condition to home station, unless it is the first maintenance facility that supports the maintenance repairs required.” There are many ways that a one-time flight can be safely and efficiently utilized to reposition aircraft with overdue scheduled maintenance. Minor scheduled maintenance such as daily inspections should be done prior to departing a port location. More intensive inspections that require disassembly, panel removal, and additional support equipment may need to be repositioned. There may not be maintenance facilities along the route of flight that are able or willing to support multiple aircraft conducting inspections. In these instances, provided the benefits outweigh risks, it may be appropriate to conduct one-time evacuation missions to reposition aircraft.

Pre-mission planning should include considerations for one-time evacuation missions. Maintenance leaders should already know what scheduled maintenance will be overdue when aircraft arrive at port. Decide which scheduled actions can be completed on the port with the amount of time, equipment, and support available at that location. Brief your commanders in advance on maintenance that cannot realistically be completed prior to flying aircraft off the port. If appropriate, obtain one-time evacuation approval. Utilize the one-time evacuation tab in ACN to capture X status maintenance. This will automatically return the aircraft to X status upon completion of the flight and will assist in tracking what maintenance needs completion after the aircraft are repositioned.

In summary, an aircraft that is overdue for a scheduled maintenance inspection/action is grounded with an X status. Commanders are not authorized to defer scheduled maintenance unless one of the operational emergency conditions outlined in Addendum One exists. If conditions allowing for one-time evacuation mission are met, aircraft with X status conditions for overdue scheduled maintenance may be repositioned to a location that will support the required maintenance actions.

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