THE STANDSGRAM

MAINTENANCE FUNDAMENTALS

By CW5 (R) Anthony Kinney (Originally Published in Volume 1, Issue 2)





"Excellence is an art won by training and habituation." —Aristotle

The demands of rigorous aviation training require excellence in maintenance to sustain such endeavors. Without an excellent maintenance program, all the best training plans are wasted as aircrews cannot get off the ground. The results of not demanding high standards in your maintenance program become clear by a lower Operational Readiness (OR) rate and aircraft carrying many deficiencies on the logbook.

Where do you start to better your maintenance program? The first step is taking an honest assessment of your maintenance program. There are outside sources available such as the Aviation Resource Management Survey (ARMS) and Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization (DES). Another key factor is whether you are dependent on a few key Soldiers and NCOs? Can it function when key leaders in the hanger are absent? What was reported on the last ARMS inspection? What issues and recommendations did DES provide? If you do not have the ARMS or DES results from the unit's last inspection, you can reach out to either organization to receive a copy. Once you know the strengths and weaknesses of your maintenance program, you can develop a comprehensive maintenance training strategy.

How do you achieve excellence in maintenance? By performing basic tasks to a high standard. This high standard is reached through training and repetition. Highly skilled maintainers are trained and evaluated using the Aviation Maintenance Training Program (AMTP). It begins with mastering the daily routine maintenance, the Preventive Maintenance Daily (PMD), and the 25- or 40-hour Preventive Maintenance Services/Inspections. These are foundational maintenance actions that allow the crew chiefs to assess aircraft readiness and correct deficiencies.

The training and evaluation of our aircraft maintainers is not only essential to achieving excellence in maintenance but keeping aircraft fully mission capable to execute missions, either in training or combat. Learning basic maintenance tasks will provide a foundation for maintainers to complete more complex and demanding tasks. It also provides a sound maintenance mindset to enable operations in austere environments. Understanding the fundamentals translates into any task, large or small, from replacing a small indicator light to changing a transmission. The AMTP provides the means by which to train and evaluate maintainers. Within the program, it is the ability to conduct no notice evaluations to measure current proficiency and assess the state of your maintenance program. It also helps deter complacency when performing routine tasks.

Standards, No Compromise!

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Complacency when Soldiers are tasked to execute the same types of inspections on a daily basis. However, their importance is critical because these inspections identify faults between major inspections. That is why mastering these seemingly simple tasks is essential in keeping aircraft airworthy and safe. The other side of the daily inspections are the accompanying special inspections required by AWR, AMAM, ASAM, etc. These are sometimes overlooked by maintainers who are not properly trained, undisciplined, unsupervised, or a combination of all three. For example, if an AH-64D unit is fielded Composite Main Rotor Blades (CMRB), the maintainer must reference an AH-64E AWR to know the recurring special inspections regarding these type of blades. A best practice to address information sharing is the Maintenance Reading Card File. Just like aviators, maintainers can have their card go red for new information or a quarterly review of information. A red card means that maintainer cannot conduct maintenance until they are green.

All maintenance begins with a 2408-13-1 entry, whether it be for a scheduled inspection or unscheduled task. Properly capturing all maintenance actions is the standard. It is required by regulation and a fundamental element of maintenance operations. This element must be engrained into every maintainer, at every level. Maintenance is not complete until all of the write-ups in the logbook are complete. Follow-on-maintenance operational checks or test flights should not be attempted until all applicable write-ups are completed. As frustrating as it can be to have to wait on the logbook, it is a vital step in the process to ensure maintenance practices are complete IAW published maintenance standards. This must be perfected to the highest degree possible and reinforced by present and engaged leaders on the hangar floor. Mastering maintenance fundamentals will propel any maintenance
program to a highly efficient operation capable of sustaining aircraft under high demands. Investing the time, training, and leader development coupled with engaged leaders at echelon will pay dividends many times over. Reward and celebrate advances in Maintenance Level (ML). Correct and counsel substandard performance if observed. The end goal is always to have aircraft available to complete the mission. But to get there you need training and consistent reinforcement of high standards to make it a part of a unit's culture. When that can happen, excellence will come to be the standard.



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