

troubles that can be found with the specific airframe and inspection, as well as downtime and pricing. That's all to your advantage."

"Vetting is very important," noted Felker, "not only to ensure the contractor meets all regulatory and insurance requirements, but also to verify they are able to handle the job and complete the work in a timely manner."

"For example, it's nearly impossible right now to get an aircraft into an avionics shop due to the volume of ADS-B installs. It takes a little pre-planning to make sure the time frames work for everyone."

Larger projects requiring supplemental type certification (STC), such as engine mods, may also represent added expense and downtime. Cunningham recommended finding a contractor with an FAA Designated Engineering Representative, Designated Airworthiness Representative or Organization Designation Authorization on site.

"The project STC can be done in-house without going out to the FAA and possibly having a lengthy wait for approvals," she noted. "This is an important step to look at for major floor-plan changes, or interior modifications or new cabin-management systems."

DON'T DISCOUNT SMALLER MROS
The situation may become more fluid when dealing with an AOG, particularly in remote locations without a major MRO facility nearby.

"Then it becomes more about who's available and in the area," Felker said. "I think we sometimes exclude companies without a big name or a large repair station, but I hate to see shops lacking repair station certification for a particular aircraft lose work they're perfectly capable of handling on an AOG. The concern is getting the airplane fixed."

"Of course, they must also adhere to all the necessary regulatory standards

and licenses," he continued, "but I'm not necessarily looking that they have a repair station certificate or a fleet of work trucks. We can walk them through the requirements to an extent."

Even when time is of the essence, some due diligence can help stave off unexpected headaches.

"Do a little research and ask for references," Cunningham advised. "Find out about the company's culture and their process, from input through delivery."

"Regardless of the size of their operation, anybody working on our airplane also must go through training prior to signing it off for return to service,"

Gordon added. "We've made this a fairly straightforward task, with web-based training highlighting knowledge of our maintenance manual and critical areas of the aircraft."

That may also include assisting smaller MROs with meeting insurance requirements defined by your company's insurance provider and risk manager.

"Those standards will be specific to the aircraft's value and other considerations," said Felker. "However, some local A&P technicians and maintenance directors may not carry that much coverage, so I'll occasionally put them under my own management company policy for that job."

"That doesn't happen very often, but it's useful for one-off help," he concluded. "The ultimate goal for everyone concerned is to get the aircraft fixed and returned to service safely."

Additional information regarding the use of contractors to support your flight operation and bolster its effectiveness in maintaining your aircraft are available in Section 4 of the NBAA Management Guide. ✈

Review NBAA's Management Guide at nbaa.org/management-guide.

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