



Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Benjamin B. Wagner
Eastern District of California**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, October 30, 2012
www.justice.gov/usao/cae
Docket #: 2:11-CR-00429 JAM

CONTACT: LAUREN HORWOOD
PHONE: 916-554-2706
usacae.edcpress@usdoj.gov

WECO GENERAL MANAGER PLEADS GUILTY TO RECKLESSLY ENDANGERING AIRCRAFT

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Jerry Edward Kuwata, 63, of Granite Bay, pleaded guilty today to recklessly endangering the safety of an aircraft, United States Attorney Benjamin B. Wagner announced.

WECO Aerospace Systems Inc. was founded in 1974 with a repair station in Lincoln and another in Burbank. Among other activities, WECO repaired and overhauled aircraft electronic components and flight instruments, including electromechanical rotables and converters. Rotables are generally parts that convert a mechanical drive into electrical output such as generators, alternators, and rotary and linear actuators. Converters are components that supply electrical power to the systems on an aircraft that need it. WECO's customers included private, for-profit aviation companies in California, Florida, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Arizona, as well as government entities who operated aircraft such as the City of Los Angeles and the Department of Homeland Security.

The Federal Aviation Administration regulates air travel and publishes regulations that FAA-certified repair stations are required to follow. These regulations include the use of parts that are approved for repairs, as well as tests and inspections that repair stations are required to conduct before a repaired part can be returned and reinstalled into an aircraft. Under the regulations, during the repair of an aircraft part a certified repair station is required to comply with the manufacturer's Component Maintenance Manual (CMM), a step-by-step guide for conducting a proper repair of the part that is prepared by the manufacturer and approved by the FAA. The CMM contains the steps that a repair shop must take to fix a part, as well as the tests and inspections that must be done before the part can be returned to service.

The WECO facilities in Lincoln and Burbank did not have some of the equipment needed to perform many of the tests required by the CMMs. Nonetheless, WECO performed repairs of parts and returned those parts to customers, falsely certifying for each one that the part had been repaired in accordance with FAA regulations.

According to court documents, Kuwata conspired with others to conceal facts about the repairs that WECO was doing from customers and the FAA; namely that those repairs were not being done in accordance with the CMMs and FAA regulations, and to communicate false information about those repairs to customers. This conduct recklessly endangered the safety of aircraft that used the parts repaired by WECO.