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CLIFFORD LAW OFFICES

Top Aviation Lawyer Calls for Immediate Grounding of all Boeing 767 Aircraft Until Fan Disks and Blades Are Inspected And Any Cracked Disks Replaced Followed By Longer-Term Safety Plan

CHICAGO, IL (April, 2018) – A top aviation attorney is now calling for the grounding of all Boeing 767 aircraft in the wake of the second uncontained engine failure (UEF) of a 17-year-old Southwest Airlines 767 in less than 20 months.

Robert A. Clifford, founder and senior partner of Clifford Law Offices of Chicago, represents a number of passengers injured in the fire after a similar UEF on an American Airlines 737 at O'Hare Airport in October, 2016, that forced an aborted takeoff.

In August, 2016, Southwest Airlines Flight 3472 from New Orleans to Orlando experienced a UEF of the same engine (CFM56-7) involved in yesterday's UEF tragedy on Southwest Airlines Flight 1380. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has not completed its investigation into Flight 3472 but in August of 2017 the FAA issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to require fan disk inspections on all CFM56-7 engines as a result of the NTSB's findings to date. Such inspections might have prevented yesterday's tragedy on Flight 1380 and Southwest Airlines and CFM International (engine manufacturer) should not have waited negligently for the FAA to issue this AD before taking action to prevent death and injury, according to Clifford.

The NTSB already has revealed that a fan blade is missing from one of the engines in yesterday's accident on Flight 1380, leading to now two UEFs due to CFM56-7 fan disk failures in less than 20 months, and an innocent mother of two is dead because of it. The flying public does not have another 20 months for the NTSB and FAA to take action - the 737-700 fleet must be grounded until each airplane's engines are inspected for such fan disk flaws and an acceptable longer-term inspection and replacement plan is finalized, Clifford said. "This is drastic action but we now have positive proof of the deadly and negligent consequences of not doing so," said Clifford, an internationally recognized aviation crash lawyer.

Clifford served as co-lead counsel in yet another similar UEF accident involving United Airlines Flight 232 where an engine exploded in mid air in July, 1989, and the DC-10 wide body airliner crash landed at Sioux City, Iowa, killing a number of people and injuring many more as it chartwheeled in flames down the runway.

"The General Electric/Safran CFM56 engines and 737-700 airplanes they are mounted on are just too dangerous to remain in the air until immediate initial inspections of each and every engine is conducted and a longer-term safety plan is implemented." Clifford said. "Further high risk of loss of life and injury to innocent people cannot be tolerated."

Clifford explained that the FAA should also consider changing airliner design requirements to provide better fuselage and passenger protection from UEF parts via tougher skin and window designs adjacent to the rotating parts of engines. Such requirements seem obvious since various military transport airplanes have gone a step further in the past via not allowing passengers to sit in the plane of rotation of propellers and other rotating engine parts out of a healthy dose of caution and concern for the safety of their passengers. Airline passengers should be protected as much as military passengers, Clifford said.