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FR 42 · STR 11 · 3.0 MM
UNRECORDED

The Business Jet Structural Records Audit

Eleven questions an inspector will ask about your airframe — and what a clean answer to each one looks like.

// WHY THIS BECAME A VALUATION ISSUE

In airline work a defect is an operations problem. In business aviation it is a pricing problem.

On a commercial fleet, a dent costs engineering hours and possibly AOG time. On a business jet, the airframe *is* the asset — so the record of what happened to it is part of the asset, and it gets read by people whose job is to find reasons to pay less.

Duncan Aviation states the position plainly: if maintenance isn't documented in the logbook, it is as if it never happened. Welsch Aviation has cited a sub-ten-year-old G550 without logbooks as worth roughly half its normal value. Lenders and insurers routinely require complete, continuous records before financing or covering an airframe. And undisclosed or poorly documented damage remains one of the two most common reasons experienced buyers walk away from a deal (Jaken Aviation, 2026).

None of that is about the damage. It is about whether the damage can be explained. The eleven questions that follow are the ones that decide it.

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01

// GROUP ONE

Continuity

Before anyone looks at a single dent, they establish whether the record is unbroken and whether it can be trusted. Four questions.

Q1

Can you produce a continuous structural record from delivery to today?

WHY THEY ASK

A gap is not evidence of damage. It is evidence that damage cannot be ruled out — which is priced the same way.

Q2 Where does the master record live, and who holds it?

WHY THEY ASK

If the answer is a laptop, a shared drive or a filing cabinet at a facility you no longer use, the record has a single point of failure.

Q3 When the aircraft last changed management company, was the defect data handed over as data — or as a scan?

WHY THEY ASK

A PDF of someone else's chart is a photograph of a record, not a record. It cannot be queried, updated or verified.

Q4 If an entry were missing, how would you know?

WHY THEY ASK

Systems with version history can prove nothing was removed. Paper cannot prove anything about what is no longer in it.

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// GROUP TWO

Damage history

What is on the airframe, where, how big, and whether anyone has looked at it twice. Four questions.

Q5

Show me every dent on this airframe — located, dated and dimensioned. How long does that take?

WHY THEY ASK

The time it takes is the answer. Three days of assembly says the record was never really kept, only stored.

Q6

Which defects are within limits, and against which revision of the SRM was that assessed?

WHY THEY ASK

"Within limits" without a revision reference is an opinion. With one, it is a finding.

Q7

Has any defect been re-measured since it was first recorded — and is it growing?

WHY THEY ASK

A single measurement describes a moment. Two describe a trend, and a trend determines whose problem this becomes.

Q8

Where has this aircraft been damaged more than once in the same zone?

WHY THEY ASK

Repeat damage in one area points at ground handling, not bad luck — and it says what the next five years look like.

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// GROUP THREE

Repair substantiation

Not whether the repair was done. Whether it can be shown to have been done properly, to the right structure — at a sale, a transition, or a lease return. Three questions.

Q9

For every repair, can you produce the approved data it was carried out to, and the release?

WHY THEY ASK

Substantiation is requested by more parties than a buyer. Lessors and lessees, technical representatives on both sides of an aircraft transition, and engineering and records teams preparing a lease return all need the same evidence — and any one of them can hold the aircraft, or the redelivery, until it appears.

Q10 Are repairs cross-referenced to the structure — frame, stringer, panel — or only to a work order number?

WHY THEY ASK

A work order number tells you a job happened. It does not tell you where, and "where" is the whole question during an inspection.

Q11 When a component carrying damage history was swapped between aircraft, did its history move with it?

WHY THEY ASK

On a paper chart the component moves and the record doesn't. The damage ends up attached to the wrong tail number, permanently — and now two aircraft are wrong.

// THE ELEVEN QUESTIONS, IN ONE PLACE

01	Continuous structural record from delivery to today?
02	Where does the master record live, and who holds it?
03	Was defect data handed over as data, or as a scan?
04	If an entry were missing, how would you know?
05	Every dent located, dated, dimensioned — how fast?
06	Within limits against which revision of the SRM?
07	Has anything been re-measured? Is it growing?
08	Repeat damage in the same zone?
09	Approved data and release for every repair?
10	Cross-referenced to structure, or to a work order?
11	Did component history move with the component?

Score it before someone else does. The sheet on the next page takes about twenty minutes per aircraft and is built to be filled in with the records you already have, not the ones you wish you had.

// SELF-SCORING SHEET · ONE AIRCRAFT

REG: _____ TYPE: _____ DATE: _____

Q	QUESTION	NO	PARTLY	YES
01	Continuous record, delivery to today	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2
02	Master record location and owner known	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2
03	Handover was structured data	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2
04	Missing entries would be detectable	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2
05	Full defect map producible same day	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2
06	Limits assessed against a stated SRM revision	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2
07	Defects re-measured over time	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2
08	Repeat-damage zones identifiable	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2
09	Approved data and release held per repair	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2
10	Repairs referenced to structure	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2
11	Component history travels with the component	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2

18–22
Records are an asset. Say so in the listing.

11–17
Defensible, but the gaps are known to you and will be found by others.

0–10
Assume every unanswered question becomes a negotiating position.

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