HENKEL SELECTED BY TEXTRON AVIATION TO PROVIDE NEW MATERIAL TO PROTECT COMPOSITE AIRCRAFT COMPONENTS

News / Manufacturer

Henkel announced it has been selected by aerospace manufacturer Textron Aviation Inc. to provide its new high-impact surfacing film to help protect composite components against lightning strikes; used in the manufacturing of several of its leading turboprop and business jet products. This innovative film adhesive produces a 30 percent weight savings compared to other surfacing films, is resistant to UV waves to reduce the need for sanding and reworking before painting, and provides an excellent surface finish, enabling a flawless paint appearance. Textron Aviation is the first aerospace manufacturer to use the new material, which Henkel expects to be widely adopted in the industry.

Henkel's surfacing film, LOCTITE EA 9845 LC AERO is a thin epoxy applied to an aircraft's exterior to protect the composites, filling voids and pin holes and producing a smooth surface that can be easily painted. Since composites are non-metallic and cannot dissipate energy from lightning strikes, aircraft manufacturers historically have used a two-step process, first applying the adhesive layer and then adding a layer of copper or aluminum mesh to diffuse energy from

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lightning. The new technology from Henkel transforms this two-step process into a single step that integrates the adhesive layer and copper mesh into one, ready-to-use film. The surfacing material reduces production time, eliminates waste from scrap mesh, and lowers costs.

Notably, LOCTITE EA 9845 LC AERO produces a 30 percent weight savings compared to other surfacing films. Just as lightweighting has become critical to manufacturers of automobiles and electronics, weight reduction is a central focal point for aircraft manufacturers to meet customer demands for increased fuel efficiency and range.

The surface film from Henkel also is resistant to paint strippers, which lessens the time required for masking and lowers finishing costs. Its excellent surface finish enables a flawless paint appearance, reducing the amount of labor that otherwise would be spent on filling and sanding.

"At Henkel, we are most grateful for the opportunity to extend our relationship with Textron Aviation through the development of this new surfacing film," said Henkel Corporate Vice President Charles Evans. "It's the latest advanced technology to emerge from our research and development efforts, allowing us to help specific industries meet the challenges they face as they innovate with new materials and processes. We expect our one-step film soon to become the standard for composite surface finishing."

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