

PERKINS — A VARIETY OF SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR AIRCRAFT WINDOW NEEDS



Jim Perkins, president (L) and Jack Brawley, vice president (R) — Perkins Aircraft Windows

COMPANY HISTORY

Perkins Plastics was founded in 1974 by Don Perkins, a tool design engineer for Bell Helicopter. He felt there was a business opportunity to manufacture and sell aftermarket helicopter windows. Some of the company's initial products included the large bubble for the Bell Model 47 and windows for Bell 206 JetRangers. Don's younger brother Jim was working for Ford Motor Company at the time, and started helping out on the weekends.

Before the brothers knew it, they had left their full-time jobs in order to focus all their efforts on Perkins Plastics. There were three employees back then.

Over the years, Perkins quickly grew. They expanded their focus from helicopters to fixed wing applications and military contracts. It set up its own acrylic stretching operation and received MIL-SPEC certification from the Navy to manufacture stretched acrylic, which is used in pressurized military aircraft around the world. By the

mid-80's, the company had grown to 150 employees. "We grew the company pretty good," says Jim Perkins, president of Perkins Aircraft Windows. "As a matter of fact, we grew it a little too good. In the 80's, we got into some financial difficulties, and started looking for someone to invest in the company."

In 1989, a Dutch investment company bought controlling interest in Perkins. Don Perkins retired, and Jim stayed on to head the company's sales and marketing.

"After a few years, I realized that I was not pulling well in that harness," Perkins shares. "I disagreed with everything they did, and they disagreed with everything I did."

Then one day, the president of the company went in to Jim Perkins' office and said, "We've decided to shut down the repair station part of the business." Perkins didn't feel that was a wise decision. "We were doing a lot of windshield repairs at that time. We were repairing Boeing and Douglas windshields. We were also doing a lot of business aviation work. In my mind, I thought the repair

station was the only area that was making money for the company. So I asked them, 'Why don't we spin it off and sell it to someone?' 'We don't have anything to sell,' he replied to me. After some contemplation, I said, 'Well, then sell it to me!'"

In March of 1991, Perkins bought the repair station assets of Perkins Plastics and started Perkins Aircraft Windows. The company focused on window repairs. Then, when the non-compete for window manufacturing expired in 1993, Jim convinced his brother Don to come out of retirement and help the company expand into window manufacturing. It's first products were Learjet, Cessna Citation and Metro windows, and has grown since then. All along, window and windshield repairs have remained a large part of Perkins' business success.

WINDSHIELD REPAIRS

Perkins developed the processes to repair windshields back in the 1980's. They inspect the windshield to determine if the heating elements and sensors are still functioning in limits. If they are in limits, the vinyl inner layers are inspected to see if they are still viable. If they haven't started cracking or turning white, then there's a good chance that Perkins is typically able to repair the windshield under a proprietary process.

Perkins also repairs delaminations in acrylic aircraft windows.

And why do window and windshield repairs continue to be a huge part of Perkins' business? It's all about the money. Jim Perkins tells *D.O.M.* magazine that the three biggest maintenance expenses in the airlines and regional are engines, landing gear and windshields. "That