

Key Aircraft Valuation Issues in Litigation

Whitepaper by David Fisher

Aircraft Appraisal Expert -- Western Aviation / Sr. Aircraft Appraiser (ASA) / USPAP Compliant Reports

When Aircraft Become Part of a Lawsuit, Value Becomes a Battleground

Aircraft are among the most complex assets attorneys encounter. Their value is influenced by mechanical condition, documentation integrity, operational history, and rapidly shifting market forces. Misunderstanding these factors can weaken a case—or destroy it.

Attorneys don't need to be aircraft experts. They simply need one on their side.

The Core Valuation Issues That Shape Litigation

1. Documentation Gaps

Aircraft value depends heavily on **complete logbooks and maintenance records**.

Missing, inconsistent, or altered documentation can reduce value by **20–40%** and often forms the basis of claims involving misrepresentation, nondisclosure, or fraud.

2. Engine Condition & Remaining Life

Engines often represent **half the aircraft's total value**.

Key factors:

- Time Since Overhaul (TSO)
- Time to next HSI
- Engine program enrollment

Small errors in engine assumptions can shift valuation by hundreds of thousands—or more.

3. Damage History & Quality of Repairs

All damage impacts value, but the degree varies widely.

A defensible appraisal must evaluate:

- Structural vs cosmetic damage
- AD compliance
- Repair station certifications
- Long-term impact on marketability

These issues frequently arise in insurance disputes and diminution-of-value claims.

4. Avionics & Regulatory Compliance

Outdated or non-compliant avionics (ADS-B Out, WAAS/LPV, aging legacy systems) affect both value and airworthiness. These deficiencies commonly appear in buyer/seller disputes and breach-of-contract cases.

5. Operational & Usage History

How an aircraft was operated matters as much as hours flown:

- Part 91 vs Part 135 usage
- High-cycle operations
- Environmental exposure
- Hangaring and maintenance habits

Operational patterns often confirm or contradict party representations.

6. Market Value on a Specific Legal Date

Litigation usually requires valuation **as of a particular point in time**—not current value.

This requires verified historical comps, market analysis, and USPAP-compliant methodology.

What Attorneys Gain From a Qualified Aircraft Appraiser

- **Court-ready USPAP-compliant valuations**
- **Clear, defensible expert testimony**
- **Support for discovery, depositions, and trial strategy**
- **Objective rebuttal of opposing expert claims**
- **Straightforward explanations of complex aviation issues**

Conclusion

Aircraft valuation in litigation is complex—and the stakes are high.

With a qualified expert guiding your team, aircraft data becomes clear, credible, and defensible.

Accurate valuation protects your case, your client, and your courtroom strategy.



David Fisher

Owner | Western Aviation

Sr. Accredited Appraiser with the American Society of Appraisers (ASA).

All appraisal reports are USPAP compliant.

[Book a FREE consultation today!](#)

WESTERN AVIATION

*Aircraft/Helicopter - Sales/Leases - All Aviation Appraisals -
Worldwide Charter Service + Charter Card*

7055 Old Katy Road, Houston, TX 77024

m: +1(281) 794-2361

o: 1 (800) AVIATION | +1 (281) 391-2510

e: david@westernaviation.com

