

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: August 29, 1975

Forwarded to:

Honorable James E. Dow
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Washington, D. C. 20591

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

A-75-70 & 71

On February 21, 1975, a Beechcraft BE-55, N907T, crashed during the hours of darkness while on an instrument approach to the Lawrenceburg Municipal Airport, Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. According to a witness, the pilot flew the aircraft over the airport twice while attempting to land it in ground fog; the ceiling and visibility were near zero at the airport.

The National Transportation Safety Board's investigation of the accident revealed that the pilot had been cleared for an approach by a controller at the Memphis Air Route Traffic Control Center. The Lawrenceburg Airport is an uncontrolled airport which is located in the Memphis Center area of control.

The nondirectional radio beacon (NDB-A) approach to runway 16 is the only published instrument approach procedure for the Lawrenceburg Airport. The National Ocean Survey (NOS) chart, used by the Federal Aviation Administration, bears the notation "Night minimums not authorized" for this approach. The Board believes that the wording of the restriction is ambiguous. It is not completely clear that the NDB-A approach to runway 16 at Lawrenceburg is authorized for instrument flight rules (IFR) operations during daylight hours only.

The controller issued an approach clearance to N907T at night and the pilot accepted the clearance. The Safety Board believes that the controller and the pilot may have been misled by the wording of the restriction on the NOS chart.

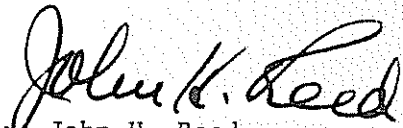
Pilots, who are on an IFR flight plan and destined to arrive at night at an airport served by a published instrument approach which is restricted to daytime use, should be advised of this restriction by air traffic control (ATC).

14 CFR 91.117 prohibits descent in other than visual conditions below the minimum descent altitude (MDA) for nonprecision instrument approaches. Since the closest weather reporting station to Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, is about 35 miles south at Muscle Shoals, Alabama, Memphis Center controllers have no way of determining the weather at Lawrenceburg. Consequently, the Safety Board believes that, instead of an approach clearance, it would be more appropriate for a center controller to issue a clearance to cruise at the appropriate minimum en route altitude/minimum obstruction clearance altitude (MEA/MOCA) for night arrivals at Lawrenceburg Airport, and all other airports where night instrument approaches are prohibited.

Accordingly, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Federal Aviation Administration:

1. Change the wording of the restriction on the National Ocean Survey instrument approach charts for locations where night approaches are not authorized so that the restriction is clearly understood. (Class II)
2. Advise pilots arriving in a terminal area on an IFR flight plan whenever the published instrument approach procedure is not authorized for night operations. Instead of an approach clearance, issue a clearance to cruise at the appropriate minimum en route altitude/minimum obstruction clearance altitude (MEA/MOCA) at night. (Class II)

THAYER, BURGESS, and HALEY, Members, concurred in the above recommendations. REED, Chairman and McADAMS, Member, did not participate.


By: John H. Reed
Chairman

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