

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

SP. 2c

Log 1604

ISSUED: July 1, 1983

Forwarded to:

Honorable J. Lynn Helms
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Washington, D.C. 20591

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

A-83-46

On June 25, 1983, a McDonnell Douglas DC-9 airplane, operated by Eastern Airlines, made a regularly scheduled passenger flight from Atlanta, Georgia, to Tampa, Florida. After the pilot landed at Tampa International Airport and while the airplane was being taxied to the gate, a flight attendant positioned at the rear of the cabin noticed smoke coming from underneath the right rear lavatory door. The flight attendant opened the door but because of the amount of smoke coming out, she immediately closed it and notified the flight crew. The captain notified the tower and proceeded to the gate where the passengers deplaned and the fire was extinguished by airport fire department personnel. There were no injuries, and the airplane received only minor damage.

Investigation of this incident by the National Transportation Safety Board indicates that the fire started within the lavatory waste receptacle located behind and under the sink basin. The fire damage pattern indicated that the fire was not contained within the waste receptacle. The fire had propagated from the upper area of the waste chute to behind the vanity and had spread to the lavatory aft wall; the fire would have continued to spread if it had not been extinguished by firefighters. Inspection of the adjacent, undamaged, left aft lavatory of the airplane disclosed that the upper area of the waste chute behind the disposal door was not sealed to contain a fire.

A review of Airworthiness Directives (AD) of the Federal Aviation Administration disclosed that AD 74-08-09, effective August 6, 1974, pertaining to transport category aircraft having one or more lavatories equipped with paper or linen waste receptacles, requires that at intervals not to exceed 1,000 hours time in service, all lavatory paper and linen waste receptacle enclosure access doors and disposal doors be inspected for proper operation, fit, sealing, and latching for containment of possible trash fires.

In view of the preliminary findings of the June 25 incident and the serious consequences that could result from an uncontained waste receptacle fire, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Federal Aviation Administration:

Issue a Telert maintenance bulletin to all principal airworthiness inspectors to inspect immediately all lavatory paper and linen waste receptacle enclosure access doors and disposal doors on the applicable aircraft for proper operation, fit, sealing, and latching for the containment of possible trash fires, in accordance with the requirements of AD 74-08-09. (Class I, Urgent Action) (A-83-46)

BURNETT, Chairman, GOLDMAN, Vice Chairman, McADAMS, BURSLEY, and ENGEN, Members, concurred in this recommendation.


By: Jim Burnett
Chairman