UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ATTACHMENT 3, p. 1 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: April 16, 1971

Adopted by the NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD at its office in Washington, D. C. on the 31st day of March, 1971.

FORWARDED TO:	
Honorable John H. Shaffer	
Administrator	;
Federal Aviation Administration	•
Washington, D. C. 20590	

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION A-71-19

As an outgrowth of the National Transportation Safety Board's continuing investigation of the accident involving a Southern Airways Douglas DC-9 at Gulfport, Mississippi, on February 17, 1971, we noted a situation relating to aeronautical charting which we believe could have a deleterious effect on aviation safety.

It was noted during the early stages of the investigation that, although there is a published instrument approach procedure for an ILS approach to Runway 13 at Gulfport, there is not, and never has been, a commissioned instrument landing system at that airport. The procedure was prepared, and the current approach plate was published and disseminated, in anticipation of a July 30, 1970, commissioning date. When this date passed without facility commissioning, a Flight Data Center (FDC) NOTAM, No. 0/681 FI/T was issued on August 3, 1970, which declared the ILS approach "procedure unusable until further notice."

We understand that the term "FI/T," as used in this type of NOTAM, relates to a condition deemed to be temporary in nature, and not expected to last in excess of 45 days. However, several times that number of days have elapsed since the issuance of FDC NOTAM 0/681, and as yet there is no foreseeable commissioning date for the Gulfport ILS.

During an attempt by a member of our staff to obtain a complete telephone briefing from the Mobile, Alabama, Flight Service Station (the tie-in FSS for Gulfport Airport) relative to a hypothetical proposed instrument flight to Gulfport, no information was provided concerning the text of FDC NOTAM 0/681 until the caller quoted the NOTAM verbatim to the FSS briefer. We recognize that air traffic control would not be based on a noncommissioned or, in fact, nonexistent, facility; however, there is a more critical

point at issue here. For example, a pilot planning to fly to Gulfport in accordance with instrument flight rules, has no practical and sure way of learning in advance of his arrival that an approach aid, upon whose weather minima he is relying for the successful completion of his flight, does not exist. Furthermore, he may be planning to use such an airport as his alternate, predicated upon the lower alternate weather minima applicable to the availability of a precision approach as opposed to a nonprecision approach, and, again, he could be "booby-trapped."

We are aware that the FAA is under constant pressure from the users of the airspace to implement new approach procedures, especially those providing lower minima, without delay, upon the commissioning of an approach aid. However, we believe that the present system of publishing instrument approach procedure charts in advance of commissioning might create more problems than it solves.

In view of the foregoing, it is recommended:

That a policy be established that no instrument approach procedure chart be published in advance of the successful completion of a commissioning flight check of the facility on which the procedure is based.

This subject has been discussed informally with cognizant personnel of your Flight Standards and Air Traffic Services. Our staff is available for further discussions.

This recommendation will be released to the public on the issue date shown above. No public dissemination of the contents of this document should be made prior to that date.

Reed, Chairman; Laurel, McAdams, Thayer and Burgess, Members, concurred in the above recommendation.

/s/

By: Oscar M. Laurel Acting Chairman

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

20 Apr 1971



Honorable John H. Reed Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board Department of Transportation Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your Safety Recommendation A-71-19 issued on 16 April 1971 concerning the Southern Airways accident at Gulfport, Mississippi.

The conditions cited in your recommendation have been noted, and we concur in the need for improved control over facility commissioning and the publication of new flight procedures.

Of primary concern is the correlation of the facility commissioning date with the effective date of the procedure. In the past, this has not presented a serious problem when limited numbers of facilities were being installed. With the implementation of our ILS program, many new installations are being accomplished and delays in project completion are being experienced more frequently. Since an approach procedure must be submitted for publication approximately eight weeks in advance of the effective date, it is not always possible to anticipate delays that might be encountered during facility installation.

At this time, we are exploring several ways to improve the correlation of the procedure effective date with the facility commissioning date which includes your recommendation for withholding chart publication pending a successful commissioning flight check of the facility. We will also investigate the availability of FDC NOTAM's at Flight Service Stations.

Action on these items will be completed within the next 90-day period, and we will advise you further on the results of our current efforts.

Sincerely,

/s/ K. M. Smith Acting Administrator