

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: November 15, 1971

Adopted by the NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
at its office in Washington, D. C.
on the 21st day of October 1971

FORWARDED TO:)
Honorable John H. Shaffer)
Administrator)
Federal Aviation Administration)
Washington, D. C. 20591)

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS A-71-56 & 57

On June 5, 1971, a Schleicher AS-W15 sailplane incurred an in-flight structural failure which resulted in a fatal accident near Boulder, Colorado. The National Transportation Safety Board's investigation revealed an initial separation of the top surface of the right stabilator with subsequent separations of both stabilators and both wings. The Schleicher AS-W15 is a single-seat standard-class sailplane of glass fibre construction, manufactured in Germany.

Examination of the inside leading edge of the right stabilator indicated a lack of adhesion by the epoxy filler cement along this leading edge seam at the interface between the top and bottom surfaces. The National Bureau of Standards report of their examination is being provided to your Flight Standards Service.

The Safety Board realizes the difficulty in ensuring adequate bonding by quality control inspection techniques on this type of construction; however, it is concerned over the catastrophic results which can occur if adequate bonding is not attained.

The Safety Board recommends that:

1. The FAA require an immediate inspection of those aircraft now operating in the United States for adequate bonding on those parts critical to the safety of flight, or replacement with known air-worthy parts.

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2. The FAA require satisfactory proof of the integrity and airworthiness of critical bonded joints before issuing airworthiness certificates to new aircraft intended for import into the United States.

The Board has coordinated its findings with members of your Flight Standards Service in Washington.

These recommendations 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; Thayer and Burgess, Members, concurred in the above recommendations. Laurel and McAdams, Members, were absent, not voting.


By: John H. Reed
Chairman