

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

ISSUED: November 24, 1971

Adopted by the NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
at its office in Washington, D. C.  
on the 10th day of November 1971

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FORWARDED TO: )  
Honorable John H. Shaffer )  
Administrator )  
Federal Aviation Administration )  
Washington, D. C. 20591 )  
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SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS A-71-63 & 64

This Safety Recommendation is a result of an incident on May 9, 1971, involving Hamburger Flugzeugbau, HFB-320 Hansa Aircraft, N380EX, Executive Airlines, Inc., at St. Croix, Virgin Islands.

While the aircraft was passing through 6,000 feet during climbout, the pilot's emergency exit window blew open. Two oxygen masks and a jacket were blown from the aircraft, through the open window. Airspeed at the time of the incident was 250 knots, and the fuselage was pressurized to an approximate differential of 2.5 p.s.i. Subsequently, the aircraft returned to St. Croix, Virgin Islands, and landed without further incident.

This type jet aircraft has an operating ceiling of 38,000 feet and a maximum operating speed of .76 Mach at 22,500 feet and above. The aircraft is equipped with emergency crew escape windows, hinged at the top to open outward. These windows are secured to the airframe by locking mechanisms at the front, bottom, and rear sides. A small lever in the lower forward corner of the window operates the locking mechanism.

The only indication to the crew that the window is properly locked is the extended position of a small button on top of the locking lever. There is no guard or other safety

feature to prevent an inadvertent unlocking of the window during flight. Pressure inside the aircraft does not keep the window locked; neither does it prevent the window's being opened at any time.

The aircraft manufacturer has designed, and is using on more recently built aircraft, a modified window-locking mechanism. In essence, the modification places a lock on the present locking mechanism. The Safety Board recommends:

1. That an airworthiness directive be issued requiring that all HFB-320 Hansa aircraft, certificated in the United States, and not presently equipped with the modified cockpit emergency exit window locking mechanism, be so equipped at the earliest practicable date.
2. That a visual means be provided for the pilot to determine the position of the cockpit window lockbolts.

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; Laurel, McAdams, Thayer, and Burgess, Members, concurred in the above recommendations.



By: John H. Reed  
Chairman

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