

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: December 28, 1979

Forwarded to:

Honorable Langhorne M. Bond
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Washington, D.C. 20591

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

A-79-108

The National Transportation Safety Board has sent an accredited representative to assist the United Kingdom Accident Investigation Branch and coordinate the U.S. efforts in the investigation of the accident involving Pan American flight 162, a Boeing 747, at the Heathrow Airport, London, on December 27, 1979.

The preliminary evidence indicates that the aircraft touched down firmly while landing in a gusty crosswind condition. Shortly afterwards the forward part of the righthand outboard engine was observed to drop leaving the engine attached at the rear and a fire developed. The fire was quickly extinguished and the crew escaped without injury.

The partial engine separation occurred in the pylon structure at the front engine mount bulkhead (pylon station 128). Although the cause for this separation has not been determined, the personnel participating in the investigation are concerned that a condition such as loose or missing fasteners or structural fatigue damage may have preexisted and contributed to the ultimate overload failure.

The Safety Board is aware that the U.K. Civil Aviation Authority has urged the Federal Aviation Administration to require an inspection of the pylon structure in the area of the forward engine attachment point on the U.S. Boeing 747 fleet. The Safety Board believes that because of the potential catastrophic effects of an engine separation, the Federal Aviation Administration should take expeditious action in accord with the CAA's recommendation.

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

Issue a telegraphic Airworthiness Directive to require a one-time inspection of the engine pylon structure in the area of pylon station 128 for loose or missing fasteners and fatigue damage for B-747 aircraft equipped with P&W JT9D engines. (Class I, Urgent Action) (A-79-108)

KING, Chairman, DRIVER, Vice Chairman, McADAMS, BURSLEY, and GOLDMAN Members concurred with this recommendation.

James B. King

By: James B. King
Chairman