

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

ISSUED: July 18, 1973

Adopted by the NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
at its office in Washington, D. C.
on the 27th day of June 1973

FORWARDED TO:

Mr. Thomas F. McCormick
Public Printer
Government Printing Office
Washington, D. C. 20401

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS A-73-51 & 52

During the month of March 1973, the National Transportation Safety Board received a letter of complaint from an airman who had been unable to obtain two aviation safety publications which he had ordered from the Government Printing Office. The complainant contended that this nonavailability of essential information was widespread and quite hazardous.

In view of the seriousness of the above allegation, representatives of our Bureau of Aviation Safety consulted with personnel of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), and the Government Printing Office (GPO).

Based upon those discussions it is apparent that the GPO has encountered a multitude of problems in recent years which have affected adversely the service to subscribers. We are certain that you are familiar with the general complaints of subscribers and that you are concerned about the corrective action needed to provide service to all subscribers.

Recognizing that you may be planning to implement procedures for corrective action at an early date, we believe this to be an appropriate time to bring to your attention a particular matter relating to GPO's handling of certain "time critical" aviation publications. The Airman's Information Manual (AIM) is a very important publication for all airmen and is a "time critical" publication because of the frequency with which the different parts of the manual are published.

The material contained in the AIM is information which the Government has determined to be essential for the safe conduct of flight operations.

Since the FAA holds the pilot responsible for knowledge of the data contained in that publication, we believe the Government has a responsibility for assuring that the subscriber receives his copy of the publication expeditiously. According to our findings, many subscribers to the AIM, and to other important aviation publications, are not receiving these publications in a timely manner. Often the publications are obsolete when received. This negates the work of many individuals responsible for the compilation and preparation of accurate data and represents a hazard to aviation. The existing FAA/GPO procedures for printing the AIM are believed to be excellent with respect to keeping printing errors to a minimum. We think this control should remain unchanged. If means can be found to assure effective "Priority Handling" of the AIM, we are convinced that the aviation safety problem with which we are concerned will be alleviated.

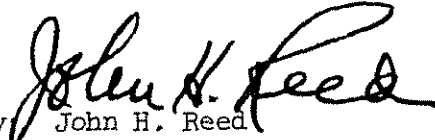
It is our understanding that GPO presently has a list of about 15 FAA aviation publications which are given priority handling. The AIM is included in that list. Although we recognize the importance of all the publications on that list, we consider the AIM to be the most "time critical" of the publications listed. It should receive special attention.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Government Printing Office:

1. Establish procedures that will give first priority status to the AIM publication over other aviation publications on the existing priority list. These procedures should assure that the AIM is sent to subscribers in a timely manner.
2. Evaluate existing procedures for the handling of other aviation publications on the current priority list to determine if effective priority service is being provided.

Our technical staff is available for further discussion or clarification of these recommendations if desired.

Reed, Chairman, McAdams, Thayer, Burgess, and Haley, Members, concurred in the above recommendations.


By John H. Reed
Chairman

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.