

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

ISSUED: August 29, 1973

Adopted by the NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
at its office in Washington, D. C.  
on the 16th day of August 1973

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FORWARDED TO: )  
Honorable Alexander P. Butterfield )  
Administrator )  
Federal Aviation Administration )  
Washington, D. C. 20591 )  
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SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS A-73-62 thru 64

The National Transportation Safety Board is now investigating the Delta Air Lines DC-9 accident which occurred during an ILS approach to the Logan International Airport in Boston, Massachusetts, on July 31, 1973.

During our review of the flight logs and maintenance records of the aircraft involved, N975NE, a problem was found which, we believe, merits your immediate attention.

These records show that numerous complaints about radio and flight instruments were recorded in the flight logs of N975NE after the aircraft was modified from the Northeast Airlines to the Delta Air Lines DC-9 avionics configuration in April 1973. Many of these complaints were of a recurring or chronic nature, as evidenced by the seven writeups between July 25 and 29, 1973, dealing with the functioning of the flight director, the DME, and one of the navigational receivers.

A total of 14 NEA DC-9 aircraft were affected by this modification plan. The records of the aircraft which immediately preceded and followed N975NE through the modification program also were examined. The records of both these aircraft, N979NE and N978NE, contained recurring radio and flight instrument complaints similar to those reported on N975NE.

Although our investigation has not progressed far enough to assess the role of avionics and instrumentation in this accident, we are concerned about possible operational implications of these chronic discrepancies and the apparent difficulty that Delta Air Lines has experienced in correcting them.

Honorable Alexander P. Butterfield (2)

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

- (1) Investigate the adequacy of the modification program, its implementation, and the quality control aspects monitored by the appropriate FAA office.
- (2) Review the adequacy of the Delta Air Lines' quality control procedures in detecting and correcting the reported discrepancies.
- (3) Consider the necessity of imposing appropriate operational restrictions on the modified DC-9 aircraft until the underlying reasons for the avionics discrepancies have been identified and corrected.

The Safety Board will appreciate an expeditious report of the findings resulting from the above actions.

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

*William R. Haley, Acting for*

By: John H. Reed  
Chairman

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