

A-69-13

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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20591

October 29, 1968

Mr. David D. Thomas
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Department of Transportation
Washington, D. C. 20590

Dear Mr. Thomas:

Information received from our accident team investigating the Northeast Airlines accident at Lebanon, New Hampshire, on October 25, 1968, involving an FH227, N380NE, indicates a need for immediate FAA precautionary action directed to all operators of aircraft equipped with Wilcox VOR Model 806A receivers.

Two other Northeast FH227 aircraft, while making approaches to Lebanon Airport on Saturday after the accident, reported false station passage by omni bearing indicator reversals before reaching the VOR station. There was another recorded occurrence of erratic VOR receiver operation on a Northeast aircraft approaching Bermuda earlier this year. TWA, which operates this Wilcox equipment in their DC-9, B-727 and some B-707 equipment, has also reported a number of erratic operation occurrences and two false reversals which were actually observed by two of your FAA inspectors.

In light of this information the Board recommends that the Administrator take immediate precautionary action to restrict all operators using this type of Wilcox VOR receiver equipment to visual approaches where radar or DME is not available and require visual flight during en route operations where an exact fix requirement is necessary for terrain avoidance, if DME or radar verification is not available.

The Board's representatives have discussed the foregoing with your Director and Deputy Director of Flight Standards and also other personnel in Washington, D. C., and Kansas City, Missouri. Our technical staff is available to provide you with further information or assistance as desired.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Joseph J. O'Connell, Jr.
Chairman