

A - 69-20

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

DEC 18 1968

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

Dear Mr. Thomas:

In your letter of July 17, 1968, responding to our recommendation of June 25, you outlined a program designed to educate and train pilots and dispatchers in order to establish a consistent policy of thunderstorm avoidance.

In furtherance of your program, we urge that you encourage the manufacturers of aircraft, as well as the operators, to reflect this thunderstorm-avoidance policy in the Operations Manuals for the various types and models of aircraft they produce or operate. This is a potentially productive area in terms of accident prevention, since the Manual is used in the initial and recurrent training of pilots and dispatchers and is carried aboard the aircraft at all times for reference material.

As an example of information not in context with your program, we have noted that certain manufacturers' manuals for new aircraft still contain a subsection entitled, "To Penetrate Thunderstorms." This section advocates going through corridors not less than 10 miles wide when a storm system is as much as 150 miles wide. Other manufacturers' manuals still contain a recommended 5-10-20 mile avoidance criteria, dependent upon altitude and freezing level. In order to strengthen the impact of your program, these entries should be altered to state clearly the avoidance aspect and the distance necessary to bypass the dangers associated with the storms.

Your consideration of the above in your thunderstorm avoidance program will be appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Original signed by

Joseph J. O'Connell, Jr.

Joseph J. O'Connell, Jr.  
Chairman