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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: October 24, 1980

Forwarded to:

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

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

A-80-110

The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating an incident involving a Cessna Model 421B, N82169, which occurred at Terre Haute, Indiana, on March 20, 1980. Although the investigation is not complete, the Safety Board has identified a problem affecting occupant escape and survival in this incident which we believe merits remedial action by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Examination of the wreckage revealed that the forward end of the writing table and the paneling associated with the table installation overlapped the lower rear corner of the emergency escape hatch frame. The overlap restricted the removal of the emergency escape hatch. In addition, the cup holder on the forward end of the writing table further impeded the removal of the emergency escape hatch. This table configuration was optional equipment for about 240 model 414 aircraft (S/N 414-0357 through 414-0800) and 508 model 421 aircraft (S/N 421B-0301 through 421B-0970), which were manufactured between 1973 and 1975. A design installation change was made with respect to the optional table installation on these models for aircraft manufactured subsequent to 1975; therefore this problem does not exist on the later aircraft.

Numerous recommendations and proposals to improve occupant escape have been made over the years by Government and industry organizations, and significant improvements have been made. However, access to the escape hatch on these aircraft is still marginal. This incident might have resulted in fatalities if a postcrash fire had erupted, and it illustrates the need to review and monitor cabin design to insure that interior installations do not obstruct the removal and use of emergency escape hatches.

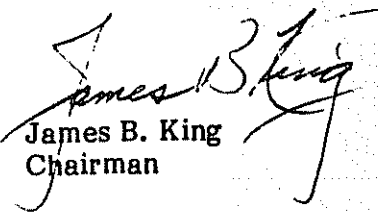
Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Federal Aviation Administration:

Require a modification to the table configuration on Cessna Model 414 aircraft (S/N 414-0357 through 414-0800) and Cessna Model

421 aircraft (SN 421B-0301 through 421B-0970) to eliminate interference of the table installation with the escape hatch. (Class II, Priority Action) (A-80-110)

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

By: James B. King
Chairman

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James B. King", is written over the typed name and title. The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a large initial "J" and "K".