

LOC 1088

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: January 11, 1980

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Forwarded to:

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

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

A-80-1 and -2

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On March 10, 1979, Swift Aire Lines, Inc., Flight 235, an Aerospatiale Nord 262, ditched in Santa Monica Bay after experiencing the loss of both engines shortly after takeoff from Los Angeles International Airport, California.

After liftoff from runway 24L, the right propeller autofeathered, and the right engine shut down. Seconds later the pilot apparently misidentified the failed engine and inadvertently shut down the left engine.

During its investigation, the National Transportation Safety Board found evidence that indicated the pilots were not able to restart the left engine because they had failed to place the propeller lever in the feather position. Propeller feathering is necessary before an engine can be restarted successfully on the Nord 262 aircraft.

At the time of the accident, there was no guidance in the company's Nord 262 operations manual indicating the urgency of setting the propeller control lever at "feather" while performing the post-autofeather procedure in order to perform a successful engine restart. After the accident, this deficiency was corrected in Swift Aire's operations manual; however, to our knowledge, no other Nord 262 operators have initiated manual changes of this nature.

The Safety Board believes this accident might have been prevented had the flightcrew been aware of the need to place the propeller lever in the feather position after engine shutdown since sufficient time was available for a successful restart.

During its investigation of the Swift Aire accident, the Safety Board also learned that during cold weather operations Ransome Airlines had experienced numerous autofeather problems during Nord 262 engine runups and ground rolls for takeoff. Corrective action for some of these incidents required draining water from the autofeather propeller pressure hose.

As a result of these autofeather problems, Ransome Airlines initiated a requirement for engine runups and autofeather checks before the first flight of the day when the air temperature is below 0° C. This procedure reportedly has greatly reduced the number of autofeather problems previously experienced by this airline.

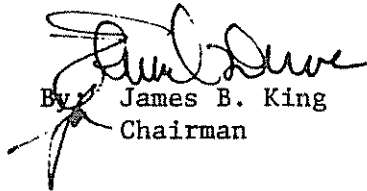
The use of this procedure indicates to the pilot that there is no blockage of the propeller feathering system, and it also minimizes an inadvertent activation of the autofeather system during takeoff which could be caused by trapped pressure in the airframe pitot system.

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

Require changes to the Nord 262 operations manuals that (1) alert the flightcrew to the fact that an airborne engine restart is not possible unless the propeller has been feathered; and (2) provide guidance to the flightcrew regarding the urgency of completing the full engine shutdown procedure after the loss of an engine. (Class II, Priority Action) (A-80-1)

Require a change to the Nord 262 operations manuals that specifies an engine runup and autofeather check before any flight when the air temperature is below 0° C. (Class II, Priority Action) (A-80-2)

KING, Chairman, DRIVER, Vice Chairman, McADAMS, GOLDMAN, and BURSLEY, Members, concurred in these recommendations.

  
By: James B. King  
Chairman