

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

ISSUED: August 24, 1972

Adopted by the NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
at its office in Washington, D. C.  
on the 26th day of July 1972

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FORWARDED TO:

Honorable John H. Shaffer )  
Administrator )  
Federal Aviation Administration )  
Washington, D. C. 20591 )  
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SAFETY RECOMMENDATION A-72-118

Over the past several years, there have been a significant number of instances in which, subsequent to a landing after a reportable occurrence, the flightcrew has failed to halt the operation of the cockpit voice recorder (CVR), thus causing the erasure of all recording pertinent to the occurrence. As a result, much significant information with valuable accident-prevention potential has been lost.

At present, sections 121.359(e) and 127.127(d) of the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) are directed solely to the certificate holder in regard to retention of recorded information subsequent to an occurrence which requires immediate notification of the National Transportation Safety Board under Part 430 of the Board's regulations. No reference is made in these sections of the FAR to specifically assigned responsibility for affirmative action to deactivate the cockpit voice recorder by pulling a circuit breaker (or, in some cases, removing a fuse) which is necessary to preserve the pertinent recorded information. In the Safety Board's view, on the basis of our experience since 1966, the FAR regulations require changing by the addition of language delineating the responsibility of the pilot-in-command to deactivate the CVR.

It should be noted that many of the instances where this loss of data occurred were due to the restoration of electrical power after the flightcrew had left the aircraft without first having deactivated the electrical circuit powering the CVR. We recognize that the crew is not always able at the time to determine whether an occurrence falls within the scope of section 430.5 of the Safety Board's regulations. However, we believe that mandatory deactivation of the CVR electrical circuit immediately upon securing the aircraft, pending the aforementioned determination, will serve to accomplish the desired end.

Honorable John H. Shaffer (2)

Nothing in the foregoing should be construed as suggesting that, prior to the next landing of the aircraft, a crewmember should shut off the CVR subsequent to an in-flight incident or accident.

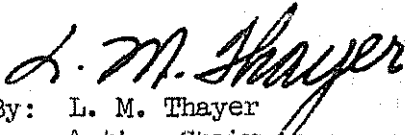
We have written on this subject to the heads of each of the companies operating aircraft which are required to carry CVR's. A copy of our letter is enclosed.

In view of the foregoing, and in light of our mutual aim of accident prevention, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Federal Aviation Administration:

Amend Parts 121 and 127 of the Federal Aviation Regulations, specifically sections 121.359(e) and 127.127(d), to delineate the responsibility of the pilot-in-command for ensuring the preservation of recorded information on a cockpit voice recorder following an occurrence likely to require immediate notification to the Safety Board under Part 430 of its regulations.

This recommendation will be released to the public on the issue date shown above. No public dissemination of the contents of this document should be made prior to that date.

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

  
By: L. M. Thayer  
Acting Chairman

Enclosure