

MADE TO ALL AIRLINES  
ALSO

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

Log 382

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: )

(Addressees shown in attached list.) )

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SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS A-72-119 thru 122

Over the past several years, there have been a significant number of instances in which, subsequent to a landing after a reportable occurrence or an incident, 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. Much significant information with valuable accident-prevention potential has been lost.

You and your staff are aware of the provisions of Part 121 (section 121.359(e)) of the Federal Aviation Regulations relating to the retention of the CVR record following an occurrence which requires immediate notification of the National Transportation Safety Board under Part 430 of the Board's regulations. Failure by the flightcrew to prevent erasure of the tape appears to contravene the intent of the provisions of FAR 121.359(e), and, in some cases, there have been indications that this failure was not unavoidable. We recognize that there are occasions wherein the crew may not be able to make a prompt assessment concerning the necessity to notify the Board immediately. In such cases it would appear that the crew should stop the CVR, thereby preserving the record against erasure, until a more accurate determination can be made regarding the scope and extent of the occurrence. In any event, flightcrews should deactivate the CVR upon securing the cockpit after any unusual occurrence.

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

(Addressees shown on attached list.) (2)

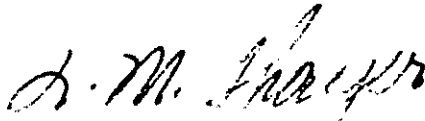
We are aware that there may be a deficiency in the language of FAR 121.359(e), since no requirement is placed on the pilot-in-command to ensure the preservation of recorded information. Accordingly, concurrent with this letter, we are transmitting to the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration a recommendation that the regulation be amended to include such a provision.

In view of the foregoing, and in light of our mutual concern with the prevention of aircraft accidents, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that your company:-

1. Reemphasize to all flight crewmembers the provisions of FAR 121.359(e) and section 430.5 of the Board's regulations.
2. Modify the curriculum for each period of recurrent training/proficiency check to include a discussion or reminder concerning the subject of this letter.
3. Add to all emergency "Secure Cockpit" checklists a note to "deactivate CVR".
4. Instruct maintenance crews to check for deactivation of the CVR before restoring electrical power to an aircraft after any unusual occurrence.

These recommendations 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

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