



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Safety Recommendation

Log 2377A

Date: July 20, 1992

In reply refer to: A-92-56

Mr. John W. Olcott
President
National Business Aircraft Association
1200 18th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

On December 11, 1991, around 0820 eastern standard time, N25BR, a Beech Aircraft Corporation Be 400 Beechjet, owned and operated by Bruno's Inc., a chain of supermarkets and related stores based in Birmingham, Alabama, landed at the Richard B. Russell Airport near Rome, Georgia, after an uneventful flight from Birmingham. The airplane, operating under 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 91, General Operating and Flight Rules, was transporting two flight crewmembers and seven passengers. The passengers, executives of Bruno's and another company, were on an annual Christmas tour of Bruno's facilities. After the Rome stop, the passengers were to be flown to Huntsville, Alabama, where they were to be driven to 11 Bruno's facilities located between Huntsville and Birmingham. The airplane lifted off at 0937, and the crew made initial contact with the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA's) Atlanta Air Route Traffic Control Center. The crew was told to maintain visual flight rules conditions. At 0940, the airplane struck Mt. Lavender, about 6 miles west of Rome. The airplane was destroyed and all seven passengers and the two pilots were killed in the accident.

Because corporate officials may have little knowledge and understanding of the need for rigorous adherence to Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs), they depend on company pilots to maintain standards of flight safety. With little FAA oversight of flights operating under 14 CFR Part 91, corporate flight operations such as Bruno's, where the two pilots were the only corporate employees dedicated to aviation, often depend on the pilots' knowledge and interpretation of the FARs to provide a safe foundation to guide operations, training, and maintenance.

The captain's behavior on this flight, and the statements made to Safety Board investigators, suggest that on occasion he did not employ good operating practices. Moreover, the evidence indicates that the first officer recognized this and attempted, unsuccessfully, to draw the attention of Bruno's management to the alleged practices. However, a Bruno's executive denied that the first officer had spoken to him in this regard.

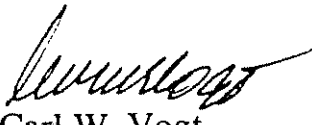
In situations where a junior flight crewmember, who is attempting to gain experience in sophisticated aircraft, is not supported by the corporate management in attempts to improve flight safety, that crewmember has few avenues available in such attempts other than to leave the corporation and, as a consequence, possibly risks delaying or giving up long-term piloting aspirations. The Safety Board believes that, to encourage adherence to good operating practices among pilots of corporate-owned or -operated aircraft, and to enhance the ability of first officers of corporate aircraft to participate in the management of the cockpit, the National Business Aircraft Association should inform corporate aircraft operators of the circumstances of this accident, and encourage them to examine their flight operations to verify that policies and procedures are established to prevent such accidents and to encourage first officers to play an active role in cockpit decision-making.

Therefore, as a result of its investigation, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the National Business Aircraft Association:

Inform your membership of the circumstances of this accident, and encourage and assist them to examine their flight operations to verify that policies and procedures are established to prevent such accidents and to encourage first officers to play an active role in cockpit decision-making.
(Class II, Priority Action) (A-92-56)

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent Federal agency with the statutory responsibility "...to promote transportation safety by conducting independent accident investigations and by formulating safety improvement recommendations" (Public Law 93-633). The Safety Board is vitally interested in any actions taken as a result of its safety recommendations and would appreciate a response from you regarding action taken or contemplated with respect to the recommendations in this letter. Please refer to Safety Recommendation A-92-56 in your reply.

Acting Chairman COUGHLIN, and Members LAUBER, HART, HAMMERSCHMIDT, and KOLSTAD adopted this recommendation.

By: 
Carl W. Vogt
Chairman