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Log  
69-121

Honorable John H. Shaffer  
Administrator  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Department of Transportation  
Washington, D. C. 20590

Dear Mr. Shaffer:

On August 25, 1969, Piper PA-22, N81100, on a flight from Andros Island, Bahamas, to New Providence Island, ditched 2 miles offshore near Nassau. The pilot and four passengers successfully evacuated the aircraft. The four life jackets aboard, in this instance, were not properly utilized.

Although the pilot was rescued, the passengers, a couple and their two children, were drowned. Had the passengers been instructed in the use of the life jackets, they very likely would have been saved.

Section 91.33 of the Federal Aviation Regulations requires that approved flotation gear be readily available to each occupant, when an aircraft is operated for hire over water and beyond power-off gliding distance from shore. However, there is no regulation requiring noncommercial general aviation aircraft to carry any such emergency equipment. In contrast, it should be noted that the Coast Guard requires all motorboats, whether for hire or pleasure, to carry an approved life preserver for each person on board under 46 CFR 25.25-10.

The Board is of the opinion that, in this area of aircraft operations, the requirement for such lifesaving equipment should be extended to noncommercial general aviation operations.

It is, therefore, recommended that, for operation under Part 91 of the Federal Aviation Regulations, flotation gear for each occupant be required equipment on all aircraft, whether or not operated for hire,

Honorable John H. Shaffer - 2 -

when flight operations include operation beyond gliding distance from land. It is further recommended that the pilot be responsible for briefing passengers with regard to the use of such emergency equipment prior to initiating such flight.

Sincerely yours,

Original signed by  
John H. Reed

John H. Reed  
Chairman

Notation 404 approved by Board as revised 4/1/70  
RJGordon/JHLawls:mlb, 3/11/70, 4/3/70, 4/6/70 (NA-87)  
cc: NC-1(2), NM-2, -3, -4, -5  
NE-1, NG-1, NE-51, NE-513  
NA-89(2), -81, -85, -86, -88DCA, -88(field offices)  
NA-87(4), -87c, NE-515, NP-1  
D.Kemp, FS-50, FAA  
Sec. Volpe(5)  
R.Bardach, Bu. of Budget  
Piper A/C Corp.