



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

## Safety Recommendation

*Log 2227*

Date: April 24, 1990

In reply refer to: A-90-51 thru -53

Honorable James B. Busey  
Administrator  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Washington, D.C. 20591

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On June 7, 1989, a McDonnell-Douglas DC-8-62, United States registration N1809E, owned by Suriname Air Ways Holding Company of Coral Gables, Florida, was being operated by Suriname Air Ways of Paramaribo, Suriname, as Flight 764 when it crashed on its approach to Zandery International Airport, Paramaribo, Suriname. Only 11 persons survived the accident; 175 persons were fatally injured including the flightcrew and the cabin crew. The airplane was destroyed by impact forces.

Although the accident is currently being investigated by the Suriname government, the National Transportation Safety Board has been actively involved in the investigation through its U.S. Accredited Representative in accordance with the provisions of Annex 13 to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) treaty. The National Transportation Safety Board is concerned that the captain of the flight was not qualified, both by age and by recent proficiency training, to act as a pilot on the flight.

The investigation found that Suriname Air Ways operates into the Miami International Airport under authority of a foreign operators certificate granted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under Part 129 of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The operations specifications for this certificate state, in part, that "the air carrier shall comply with the Airmen Licensing and Competency requirement of its government for international air service. These requirements will be at least equivalent to the international standards contained in Annex 1 and Annex 6 of ICAO."

The investigation disclosed that Suriname Air Ways had supplemented its own flightcrews by contracting for additional flightcrew personnel. The flightcrew of flight 764 consisted of three Americans who were hired on a week-to-week contract basis through Air Crews International Inc. (ACI). As required by the

contract, these pilots were represented by ACI to the air carrier as being FAA licensed, qualified, and meeting all proficiency requirements to operate the DC-8. The investigation has disclosed further that ACI did not accomplish proficiency checks of the personnel that it provided but rather required each pilot to be responsible for his own training and proficiency. Additionally, Suriname Air Ways did not check the backgrounds, perform flight checks, or do en route or proficiency checks of these pilots because Suriname Air Ways assumed that the pilots were fully qualified as required by the contract.

The investigation found that the captain of flight 764 was 66 years old. Additionally, in the 6 months prior to the accident, two other contract pilots were past 60 years of age when they flew as captains on Suriname Air Ways airplanes. All three of these pilots had acted as captain on Suriname Air Ways flights that operated into and out of the United States.

Suriname regulations, similar to U.S. regulations and ICAO recommended practices require that no one who has reached his 60th year may operate an airplane as pilot in command or as first officer. As these three captains were over the age limit by Suriname regulations and ICAO standards, the airline was not in compliance with its Part 129 operating specifications each time one of these pilots operated a Suriname Air Ways airplane into the United States.

Further investigation into the captain's qualifications disclosed that he had received his last proficiency check on April 16, 1989, from Flying Tigers, Inc. of Marietta, PA. This check was conducted in a Grumman Cougar (GA-7), a four seat light airplane weighing under 12,500 pounds gross weight and powered by twin reciprocating engines. The captain apparently used the pilot proficiency check form provided by Flying Tigers as proof of recency of experience and proficiency to ACI. As can be seen, Flying Tigers, Inc.'s trade name is very similar to that formerly used by a well known 14 CFR Part 121 international air carrier. The Suriname Airways officials stated that they had believed that the captain had received his proficiency check from the Part 121 carrier.

Since the accident involving flight 764, the Safety Board has become aware that there are several agencies or brokers in the United States that provide contract flightcrews to foreign airlines which operate into the U.S. under Part 129. Apparently, there are many American pilots over the age of 60 who are on the rosters of these agencies or who are otherwise attempting to gain employment with Part 129 air carriers. Additionally, few of these agencies perform their own proficiency checks of the pilots that are on their rosters and generally require that the pilots

pay for their own recurrency checks and simulator time. Currently, there is no FAA oversight or regulations related to such U.S. agencies.

The Safety Board recognizes that the FAA does not perform ramp inspections of aircraft operating under Part 129 or otherwise inspect the operations of foreign airlines. The Safety Board understands that the lack of routine surveillance of Part 129 operations by the FAA may stem from its concern for possible repercussions to U.S. flag carriers operating overseas. However, as the two DC-8s owned by Suriname Airways were registered in the United States, the Safety Board believes that the FAA had ample justification to board the airplanes, inspect the credentials of the pilots, and conduct en route inspections. Further, the Safety Board believes that the FAA should exercise some type of regulatory oversight of U.S. companies that provide pilot services to international airlines.

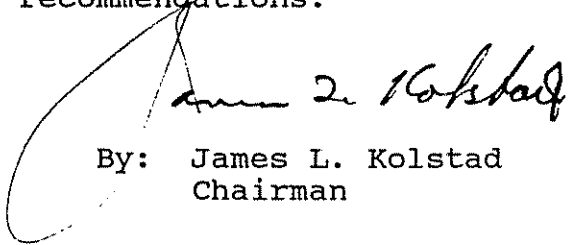
Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Federal Aviation Administration:

Perform periodic ramp and en route inspections of air carriers operating aircraft under 14 CFR Part 129 that are registered in the United States. (Class II, Priority Action) (A-90-51)

Require air carriers operating into the United States under Part 129 to provide the FAA with a list of the names, dates of birth, and certificate number of all captains and first officers operating airplanes into the United States. If pilots are found to have reached their 60th birth day, inform the air carrier that these pilots are not authorized to operate as either captain or copilot under the terms of the operations specifications issued in accordance with Part 129. (Class II, Priority Action) (A-90-52)

Promulgate rules to regulate United States companies that provide pilots by contract to international air carriers. (Class II, Priority Action) (A-90-53)

KOLSTAD, Chairman, COUGHLIN, Acting Vice Chairman, LAUBER and BURNETT, Members, concurred in these recommendations.

  
By: James L. Kolstad  
Chairman