

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

FOR RELEASE: 6:30 A.M., E.S.T., JANUARY 25, 1977  
(202) 426-8787

ISSUED: January 25, 1977

-----  
Forwarded to:

Honorable John L. McLucas  
Administrator  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Washington, D. C. 20591

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

A-76-141 through 143

-----  
On April 5, 1976, an Alaska Airlines B-727 crashed at Ketchikan International Airport, Ketchikan, Alaska. During its investigation of that accident, the National Transportation Safety Board found that the Federal Aviation Administration had not inspected the airport's crash/fire/rescue (CFR) capability in almost 12 months. During depositions, the Safety Board found that the FAA's Airport Certification and Safety Branch, Alaska Region, was staffed with two inspectors, responsible for on-scene inspections of 63 certificated airports, 88 limited-certificated airports, and over 2,000 uncertificated airports and landing fields in Alaska. Ketchikan is one of several certificated airports which do not have a full-time CFR crew.

At the time of the accident, airport employees -- including the airport manager who was in charge of CFR operations -- were responsible for firefighting. They had not been trained formally in firefighting techniques or in the operation of the two airport firetrucks. In addition, the airport manager was not trained to direct firefighting activities nor did he have the experience and manpower needed for the job. Consequently, their firefighting activities at the scene were minimal.

The Ketchikan City Fire Department (KCFD) arrived and assumed command about 20 minutes after the crash. The efforts were halted for about 30 minutes, however, because additional hose was needed and additional foam had to be delivered by the Coast Guard. Eventually, additional hose was found on the primary firetruck which was manned by the airport manager, who was not aware that the truck carried such

A-76-141 through 143

Honorable John L. McLucas - 2 -

equipment. The KCFD personnel were not familiar with the airport trucks or with the location of ancillary CFR equipment which was stored in unmarked compartments on the trucks. The KCFD personnel had never toured the airport to familiarize themselves with the locations of access roads, gates, taxiways, and hydrants.

Finally, the Ketchikan Airport Emergency Plan, which had been revised in July 1975, had not been reviewed or approved by the FAA. In fact, the FAA had not been aware that the plan had been revised.

After the accident, the FAA and the State of Alaska inspected Ketchikan International Airport to review its CFR capabilities. The inspection revealed that the airport did not comply with five sections of 14 CFR 139. As a result, the State of Alaska has begun to train airport and Alaska Airlines employees in firefighting techniques and additional corrective actions were carried out or planned for future implementation to the satisfaction of the FAA Alaska Region.

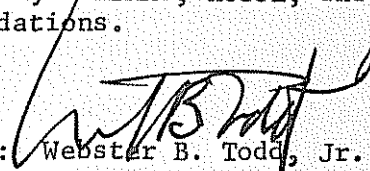
In view of the foregoing, the Safety Board recommends that the Federal Aviation Administration:

Inspect more frequently the crash/fire/rescue capabilities of certificated airports, especially those in Alaska, to assure adequate training of personnel, maintenance and operational readiness of CFR equipment, currency of emergency procedures, and availability of qualified personnel to conduct and to direct CFR activity. (A-76-141) (Class II, Priority Followup)

Initiate a program for those airports which have no full-time CFR crew, especially those in Alaska, to properly train and equip the personnel that must respond to an aircraft fire. (A-76-142) (Class II, Priority Followup)

Amend 14 CFR 139 to require that airport personnel who are not professional firefighters but who, because of their supervisory status, must direct CFR operations at airports, be qualified to perform this task. (A-76-143) (Class II, Priority Followup)

TODD, Chairman, BAILEY, Vice Chairman, McADAMS, HOGUE, and HALEY, Members, concurred in the above recommendations.

By:   
Webster B. Todd, Jr.  
Chairman

THIS INFORMATION WILL BE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC ON THE ISSUE DATE SHOWN ABOVE. NO PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE MADE PRIOR TO THAT DATE.