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National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Safety Recommendation

Date: July 19, 1991

In reply refer to: A-91-53

Mr. Walt Coleman
Vice President for Operations
Air Transport Association
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After November 26, 1986, airplanes operated under 14 CFR 121 were required to be equipped with floor proximity emergency escape path markings. Escape path marking systems that have been approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) are generally a series of lights mounted near the floor on aisle passenger seats or a series of lights along the aisle that are intended to assist persons to locate exits during darkness or in smoke. The systems are battery powered to provide illumination when airplane electrical power is not available.

On May 9, 1989, the FAA issued Advisory Circular (AC) 121-24A entitled "Passenger Safety Information Briefing and Briefing Cards." This AC, which provides guidance for acceptable methods of informing passengers of the safety provisions of airplanes, suggests that floor proximity emergency escape path markings be depicted on safety briefing cards and pointed out to passengers during flight attendant oral safety briefings.

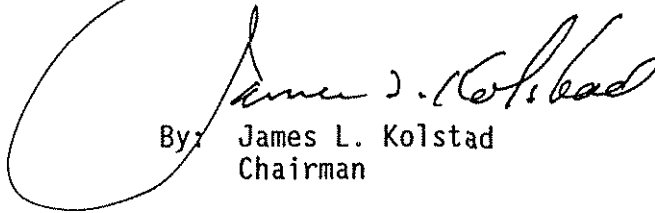
The Safety Board is pleased that many air carriers have elected to include descriptions and locations of floor proximity emergency escape path marking systems during flight attendant oral safety briefings and also on safety briefing cards. However, almost 4 years after the effective date of the FAA regulation that required floor proximity emergency escape path marking systems and more than 17 months after issuance of AC 121-24A, other air carriers do not provide similar safety information to passengers.

The Safety Board believes that airline passengers should be informed of safety equipment that will allow them to egress quickly following an accident. This can be especially important since air carriers are permitted by the FAA to use a variety of escape path marking systems and passengers may not be able to understand the use of various colored lights and arrows that can be used to show the locations of exits. Therefore, the Safety Board believes that in the absence of FAA requirements to inform passengers of the location and operation of floor proximity emergency escape path marking systems it is appropriate for the Air Transport Association to encourage its members to depict these systems on passenger safety briefing cards and for flight attendants to describe the operation and location of the systems during oral safety briefings.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Air Transport Association:

Request member air carriers to depict floor proximity emergency escape path marking systems on passenger safety briefing cards and to include descriptions of the location and operation of the systems during flight attendant oral safety briefings. (Class II, Priority Action) (A-91-53)

Chairman KOLSTAD, Vice Chairman COUGHLIN, and Members LAUBER and HART concurred in this recommendation. Member HAMMERSCHMIDT did not participate.



By: James L. Kolstad
Chairman