

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Log 1461

ISSUED: July 13, 1983

Forwarded to:

Honorable J. Lynn Helms
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Washington, D.C. 20591

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

A-83-44

On April 14, 1982, the left main landing gear on a Cessna Model 421C, N6866C, collapsed while the airplane was taxiing to the ramp after a normal landing at Cuyahoga County Airport, Cleveland, Ohio. There were no injuries to occupants, but the airplane was substantially damaged.

The National Transportation Safety Board's postaccident examination of the right and left main landing gear assemblies revealed that the left trunnion, Part No. 5144103-1, had failed and that the right trunnion also showed evidence of cracking.

On August 7, 1978, the Cessna Aircraft Company (Cessna) issued Service Information Letter ME 78-28, which recommended that a special inspection be conducted of the main landing gear trunnions installed in various Cessna Model 414A and 421C airplanes. On March 19, 1979, Cessna issued Service Information Letter ME 79-11, which expanded the provisions of ME 78-28 to include similar inspections for Cessna Model 402C airplanes and recommended that recurrent inspections be conducted at 50-hour intervals, and Owner Advisory ME 79-11A; both the letter and the advisory provided information about the trunnion replacement program on these airplanes which would eliminate the need for the recommended 50-hour inspections when the new trunnions were installed.

Examination of the maintenance records for N6866C indicated that the main landing gear trunnions had been inspected, in compliance with ME 79-11, in October 1979 after the airplane had logged 311 hours in service. However, the airplane's maintenance records showed no evidence that the trunnions had been replaced or that the recommended 50-hour recurrent inspections had been accomplished since that time. At the time of the accident, the trunnions had been in service 1,015 hours.

The Safety Board is aware that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) alerted Cessna owners and operators of the trunnion failure problem in the June 1980 issue of the General Aviation Airworthiness Alerts. However, because the failure of a main landing gear trunnion can result in a potentially hazardous situation for the airplane and its occupants, and because many of these Cessna airplanes are used in commuter operations, the Safety Board believes that the FAA should require the inspection of the trunnions at the recommended intervals until such time as they are replaced with the new type.

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

Issue an Airworthiness Directive which requires adherence to the inspection program for the main landing gear trunnions on all affected Cessna Model 402C, 414A, and 421C airplanes until such time as they are replaced with the new trunnion assemblies in accordance with the provisions of Cessna Service Information Letter ME 79-11. (Class II, Priority Action) (A-83-44)

BURNETT, Chairman, GOLDMAN, Vice Chairman, McADAMS, BURSLEY, and ENGEN, Members, concurred in this recommendation.


By: Jim Burnett
Chairman