

ATC Language Change Sought

The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has recommended that air traffic controllers use more precise language when advising flight crews of a change in the landing runway.

The recommendation says that, when amending a runway assignment, a controller should “provide a specific instruction to the pilot advising of the runway change; for example, ‘UPS 1307, change to Runway 25L, cleared to land.’”

NTSB’s Sept. 25, 2006, action follows its investigation of a Feb. 7, 2006, accident in which the crew of a United Parcel Service (UPS) Douglas DC-8-71F conducted an emergency landing

on Runway 27R at Philadelphia International Airport after reporting a cargo smoke indication (see “FlightOps,” page 28).

The crew had received a clearance for a visual approach to Runway 27R before the smoke indicator illuminated. After being told of the smoke indication, air traffic control (ATC) — acting in accordance with the airport’s emergency procedures — changed the clearance to Runway 27L.

“Although the pilot acknowledged the change in landing clearance, he continued for Runway 27R,” the recommendation said. “The controller ultimately cleared the flight to land on Runway 27R when it was apparent that the flight crew

had not understood the change in landing clearance.”

The recommendation said that, although the pilot read back the amended clearance for landing on Runway 27L, he was “in the midst of responding to emergency checklist items, and it appears that he did not recognize that the local controller had changed his landing runway.”

The recommendation said that, to minimize misunderstanding, the controller could have asked the pilot “can you accept Runway 27L?” and then could have told the crew to “change to Runway 27L.”

The three crewmembers received minor injuries in the accident, and the airplane was substantially damaged.

Canada to Increase Landing Visibility Requirements

Canadian aviation regulations have been modified to prohibit operators of commercial aircraft from beginning an approach when visibility is so poor that a successful landing is unlikely.

The regulations, which will take effect Dec. 1, 2006, will establish minimum visibility requirements of at least 1,600 ft/500 m, depending on factors involving the type of instrument

approach, flight crew, aircraft and airport requirements.

“This new requirement, combined with existing safety measures and regulations, will help to enhance the safety of passengers and crew and help to prevent accidents,” said Lawrence Cannon, minister of transport, infrastructure and communities.

The change will help Canadian regulations harmonize with international standards, he said.

Changes in Australian Airspace Management

Airspace classification and designation functions are being transferred to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) of Australia from Airservices Australia in a move intended to “establish requirements for a single common risk-management framework and processes for assessing and implementing future changes, and make agencies more accountable for their regulatory decisions,” said Warren Truss, minister for transport and regional services.

The change will place regulation of airspace in its “natural home” with the safety regulator, Truss said. He added that new technologies, including automatic dependent surveillance–broadcast for air traffic surveillance, will help provide for “better tracking of aircraft, less restrictive air traffic control separation standards and reduced fuel burn and travel time.”



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FAA Asked to Evaluate Safety Inspector Requirements

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is being asked to develop a new computer model to evaluate the number of aviation safety inspectors required to adequately staff the FAA Flight Standards Service.

The recommendation from the U.S. National Research Council, a nonprofit institution that advises the U.S. government on research and technology, says that the current model does not provide adequate staffing.

FAA currently employs about 3,600 aviation safety inspectors — 95 percent of them in the Flight Standards Service — and the number has remained stable in recent years, even as the aviation industry has adopted more advanced technologies and new manufacturing tools and techniques, the council said. At the same time, FAA has relied more on designated nongovernment inspectors to perform some tasks previously handled by safety inspectors.



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GPS Trial Extended

The U.K. Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has extended its trial of global positioning system (GPS) approaches for general aviation aircraft at six airports. The trial will continue until Dec. 31, 2006.

The extension is intended to provide more time for pilots to participate in the trial, said Ron Elder, head of the CAA Safety Regulation Group's Licensing Standards Division. Of 1,700 pilots who could fly the approaches, 100 pilots have registered for the trial, 47

have flown the approaches and only 26 have provided feedback information, Elder said.

Those who have provided feedback have indicated that they are not sufficiently familiar with the equipment and that there is confusion about "procedure representation and distance to runway during the final approach," CAA said. "These comments have significant implications for the development of human factors issues and training guidance."



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New Child Safety Restraint Gains FAA Approval

A new type of child safety restraint has been approved by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for use on commercial flights. The device — the AmSafe Aviation CARES — is a smaller, lighter-weight alternative to forward-facing child safety seats and is designed for children who weigh between 22 and 44 lb (10 and 20 kg).

CARES uses an additional safety belt and a shoulder harness that encircles the airplane seat back and attaches to the passenger seat lap belt. It is not approved for use in motor vehicles.

FAA Administrator Marion C. Blakey said that the device will "provide parents with options so they can make the right decision for their children when they travel by air." FAA regulations allow children

younger than two years of age to sit on an adult's lap during flight, but use of an approved child safety device is recommended.



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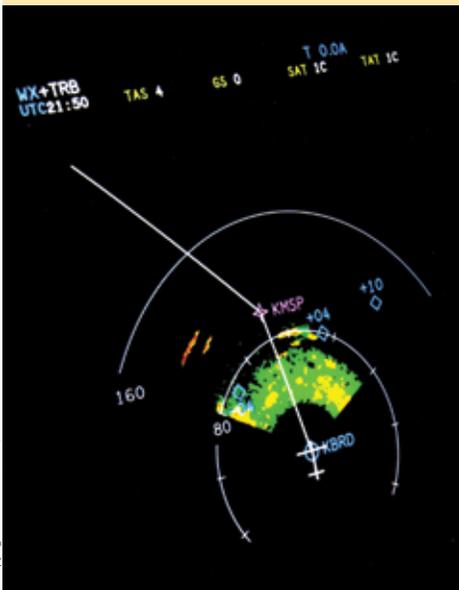
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TCAS May Be Required in Canadian Aircraft

Transport Canada (TC) has proposed requiring the installation of collision avoidance equipment in all large commercial aircraft. The proposal, published in September, provides for a 30-day period for public comment, followed by TC’s review of comments and publication of final regulations.

The proposal also calls for installation of traffic alert and collision avoidance systems (TCAS) in all recently manufactured aircraft, TC said.

“Ensuring Canadian aircraft have the additional tools to improve safety will help us maintain our enviable aviation safety record,” said Lawrence Cannon, minister of transport, infrastructure and communities.



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A380 Vortices Will Extend Takeoff Wait for Other Aircraft

Aircraft taking off or landing behind an Airbus A380 would have a longer wait than is now required to avoid wake vortices, according to a study by a panel of international aviation officials.

Airbus said that the study found that, on takeoff, large aircraft following an A380 would be required to wait two additional minutes; medium-sized and small aircraft would wait an additional three minutes. On approach to landing, crews of other aircraft would be required to increase their separation from an A380 preceding them by an additional 2 nm (4 km) for large aircraft, an additional 3 nm (6 km) for medium-sized aircraft and an additional 4 nm (7 km) for light aircraft.

The panel said that overall delays would be shorter than the wait times because there would be no constraints on A380s following other aircraft.

The panel’s conclusions may be revised, based on further reviews.

In Other News ...

Claire Tomlin, a Stanford (California, U.S.) University associate professor of aeronautics and astronautics, is one of 25 recipients of the 2006 “genius awards” from the MacArthur Foundation. Tomlin, an aviation engineer whose specialty is the development of methods for analyzing hybrid control systems and applying the results to practical problems, was notified in September that she will receive the MacArthur fellowship and an accompanying US\$500,000 grant. ... **George Ferito**, a member of the Flight Safety Foundation Corporate Advisory Committee, has been named director of business development for rotor wing aircraft at FlightSafety International. ... **William O. McCabe** has formed The McCabe Group, an aviation consulting firm, in Newark, Delaware, U.S.; he is a member of the Flight Safety Foundation Board of Governors and the Board’s Executive Committee, and a retired global managing director for aviation at DuPont Co. ... Administrator **Marion C. Blakey** of the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has appointed a committee to develop recommendations on whether the United States should adopt a new international standard to allow pilots over age 60 to continue flying commercial airplanes. The International Civil Aviation Organization standard, effective in November, would increase the age limit from 60 to 65. The FAA Age 60 Aviation Rulemaking Committee is scheduled to complete its work before the end of November.



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Tomlin

Ferito



Compiled and edited by Linda Werfelman.