

NTSB Issues New Icing Recommendations

Training for pilots of Cessna Citation 560s should be altered to emphasize requirements for increasing airspeed and operating deice boots during approaches when ice is on the wings, the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) says.

The proposal was one of six NTSB safety recommendations to the U.S.

Federal Aviation Administration as a result of the NTSB investigation of a Feb. 16, 2005, accident in which a Cessna 560 operated by Martinair for Circuit City Stores crashed near Pueblo, Colorado, U.S. The six passengers and two crewmembers were killed in the accident, which destroyed the airplane.

The NTSB said that the probable cause of the crash was the crew's "failure to effectively monitor and maintain airspeed and comply with procedures for deice boot activation on the approach." The result was an aerodynamic stall and the crash.

NTSB recommendations also called for changes in pilot training to "emphasize monitoring skills and workload management," changes in manuals and training programs to emphasize that leading-edge deice boots be activated as soon as an airplane enters icing conditions, and a requirement that deice boot systems on airplanes certified for flight in known icing conditions be equipped with a mode to automatically continue cycling the deice boots after the system has been activated.

Other recommendations were for a review of the icing certification of airplanes with pneumatic deice boots to ensure that the airplanes comply with requirements for recommended revised certification standards, and modification of the Cessna 560 stall-warning system "to provide a stall-warning margin that takes into account the size, type and distribution of ice, including thin, rough ice on or aft of the protected surfaces."



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Black List Revisions

The European Commission has updated its so-called black list of airlines banned in the European Union (EU), removing two carriers — Phuket Air of Thailand and DAS Air Cargo/Dairo Air Services of Uganda and Kenya — that "have proved ... that they have now rectified the serious safety deficiencies" that placed them on the list, the commission said.

The names of 49 carriers have been removed from the list of those whose operations are banned within the EU

because they are no longer operating; names of 10 others have been added, the commission said. About 100 airlines are on the list. In addition, Pakistan International Airlines is permitted to operate within the EU only with its Boeing 777s.

Other actions at a March 5 commission meeting included acknowledgement of actions by Bulgaria to temporarily block five Bulgarian carriers from operating into other EU member nations, pending implementation of remedial measures, and by Russia to prohibit nine

carriers from operating charter flights and some other flights into the EU, except under "exceptional circumstances," the commission said.



Susan Reed



U.S. Army

Night Vision Trial

Pilots in some civilian helicopter operations in Australia will participate in a year-long trial of night vision goggles (NVGs) as part of an assessment of proposed NVG standards for eventual incorporation into the Australian Civil Aviation Safety Regulations.

Participants in the trial are specialized operators that already have approval to use NVGs on emergency medical services, search and rescue, marine pilot transfer, police and aerial fire fighting flights. Private helicopter operators are prohibited from using the devices until the trial and a subsequent evaluation have been completed; then holders of air operator certificates may submit applications to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority for approval to use NVGs.

World's Largest LOSA

Japan Airlines (JAL) plans to implement a line operations safety audit (LOSA) beginning in April to help reduce human error in flight operations and improve operational quality. The airline says this will be the largest LOSA ever performed at a single airline.



JAPAN AIRLINES

The International Civil Aviation Organization recommends the use of LOSA, which involves the collection of data by trained observers during routine flights to determine how flight crews detect, manage and mismanage threats and errors.

The JAL program will place LOSA observers on 435 domestic and international flights. Their human factors observations will be analyzed by TLC, a LOSA operating company; based on the analysis, JAL will implement any necessary corrective actions.

Aging Aircraft

The average age of many aircraft fleets in Australia is increasing, but the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) says this should not adversely affect safety “if quality maintenance systems are in place.”

An ATSB report said that, as of the end of 2005, the average age of turbofan aircraft with maximum takeoff weights between 50,000 kg and 100,000 kg (110,230 lb and 220,460 lb) used in regular public transport in Australia was six years — two years newer than the average age in 1995. Turbofan aircraft with maximum takeoff weights of more than 100,000 kg had an average age of 11 years, compared with eight years in 1995.

The ATSB said that the relatively new age of the aircraft and the manufacturers’ continuing airworthiness support “provide a double defense to ensure the safety of the Australian multi-engine turbofan aircraft fleet.”

Turboprop aircraft, typically used in low-capacity airline service, had an average age of 18 years at the end of 2005, two years older than the 1995 average, the ATSB said.

The oldest airplanes are those in the piston-engine fleet, with an average age of 30 years, largely because manufacturing output has declined in recent years, the ATSB said.

“Aging of an aircraft can be a safety issue, but with adequate maintenance, the consequences of aging can be mitigated,” the ATSB report said.



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CRJ Flap Failures

Calling concerns over a number of flap failures on Bombardier Canadair Regional Jets (CRJs), the Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) has called on the Canadian Minister of Transport to act to “substantially decrease the number of flap failures.”

The TSB statement was issued after preliminary investigation of a Nov. 21, 2006, incident in which the flaps failed to retract on an Air Canada Jazz CRJ during a missed approach at Prince George, British Columbia. The flight crew diverted to Fort St. John, tried

unsuccessfully to correct the problem during the flight and landed the airplane without further incident at Fort St. John. No one was injured, and the airplane was not damaged in the incident, which is still being investigated.

There were 20 reports of flap failures on CRJ airplanes in 2005, 24 reports in 2006 and 24 reports in just the month of January 2007 — data that suggest that the frequency of the problem may be increasing, the TSB said. A search of a joint Canadian-U.S. service difficulty report database found that, of 751 reports of flap problems in

2006, 381 (51 percent) occurred on CRJ series aircraft.

“The [TSB] is concerned that, despite best efforts by the industry and regulators alike to reduce the number of flap failures in the CRJ fleet, that number is increasing,” the TSB said. “A CRJ flap failure clearly has the potential to lead to a much more serious incident or an accident.”

Published reports said Bombardier had determined that the problem was associated with extreme cold weather and that the company was developing methods of correcting the problem.



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Legislating Safety

Canadian airline pilots are urging approval of legislation in Canada’s House of Commons that would require establishment of safety management systems (SMS) throughout that nation’s aviation industry.

The proposal would establish accountability for safety “at the highest levels within a company” and provide for the establishment of confidential and non-punitive safety programs for the reporting of safety information “without fear of retribution,” said

Capt. Dan Adamus, president of the Canada Board of the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA).

“Rather than depending on increasingly rare airline accidents to identify safety risks, our industry needs a proactive approach to identifying hazards before accidents occur,” Adamus said. “Safety data must be collected within a safety-centered and non-punitive culture where pilots and other aviation employees feel comfortable reporting emerging risks.”

In Other News ...

The **U.S. Government Accountability Office** says the Federal Aviation Administration is facing “data and human resource challenges” that could complicate implementation of its risk-based, data-driven safety programs to oversee the aviation industry. ... The **Civil Aviation Safety Authority of Australia** plans to establish an Office of Airspace Regulation, to be responsible for reviewing airspace classification and designation; the tasks currently are performed by Airservices Australia.

Compiled and edited by Linda Werfelman.