

NTSB Recommendation A-83-081

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Rec #: A-83-081

NTSB Status: Closed - Acceptable Alternate Action

Issue date: 10/31/1983

Accident Date: 6/2/1983

Source Event: ACCIDENT

Location: CINCINNATI Ohio

Mode: AVIATION

Most Wanted List: No

Closed date: 7/28/1988

Report Number: AAR-84-09

Accident ID: DCA83AA028

Background Synopsis:

THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD IS CONTINUING ITS INVESTIGATION OF THE ACCIDENT INVOLVING AIR CANADA FLIGHT 797 WHICH OCCURRED ON JUNE 2, 1983, WHEN THE FLIGHTCREW OF THE MCDONNELL DOUGLAS DC-9 AIRPLANE WAS FORCED TO MAKE AN EMERGENCY LANDING AT THE GREATER CINCINNATI AIRPORT BECAUSE OF AN IN-FLIGHT FIRE. THE INTERIOR MATERIALS OF THE AIRPLANE'S CABIN CONTINUED TO BURN AFTER THE LANDING. FIVE CREWMEMBERS AND 18 PASSENGERS WERE ABLE TO EVACUATE THE BURNING CABIN; THE REMAINING 23 PASSENGERS DIED IN THE FIRE. THE SAFETY BOARD'S INVESTIGATION HAS DETERMINED THAT THE FIRE BEGAN IN THE AIRPLANE'S LEFT REAR LAVATORY, BUT THE SOURCE OF IGNITION HAS NOT YET BEEN IDENTIFIED. TO PROMOTE A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM TO ADDRESS THE POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS SITUATION POSED BY IN-FLIGHT FIRES, THE SAFETY BOARD IS ISSUING NEW SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS RATHER THAN REITERATING RELEVANT SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO THE FAA.

Recommendation:

THE NTSB RECOMMENDS THAT THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION: REQUIRE THAT THE LOCATION OF THE TACTILE EMERGENCY EXIT INDICATORS BE DEPICTED IN THE PASSENGER BRIEFING CARDS AND INCLUDED IN THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT ORAL BRIEFINGS.

Correspondence:

Response Date: 1/27/1984 From: Addressee

Response:

FAA COMMENT: THE CURRENT FAA SAFETY REGULATIONS REQUIRE THAT ALL PASSENGERS BE ORALLY BRIEFED BY A CREWMEMBER ON AT LEAST THE FOLLOWING CABIN SAFETY INFORMATION ITEMS: THE LOCATION OF EMERGENCY EXITS, SMOKING, THE USE OF SAFETY BELTS, THE LOCATION AND USE OF ANY REQUIRED EMERGENCY FLOTATION MEANS, THE PROPER STORAGE OF ALL CARRY-ON BAGGAGE, SECURITY OF SEAT TRAYS AND SEAT BACKS, AND THE USE OF THE EMERGENCY OXYGEN SYSTEMS, ETC. IN ADDITION, THESE SAME INFORMATION ITEMS MUST BE DEPICTED ON PASSENGER BRIEFING CARDS. THESE REQUIRED BRIEFINGS COVER A BROAD SPECTRUM OF SAFETY-RELATED ITEMS THAT, IF ADDED TO, MAY MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE AVERAGE PASSENGER TO ASSIMILATE AND RETAIN. WE DO NOT CONCUR WITH THIS RECOMMENDATION, AS IT IS NOT FEASIBLE OR PRACTICAL TO REQUIRE ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO THE ALREADY EXTENSIVE ORAL BRIEFING. WE

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BELIEVE THAT THE FLOOR PROXIMITY EMERGENCY ESCAPE PATH MARKINGS SYSTEM PROPOSED BY NPRM NO. 83-15 WOULD PROVIDE A MORE PRACTICAL AND A HIGHER LEVEL OF CABIN SAFETY THAN WOULD BE PROVIDED BY TACTILE MARKERS.

Response Date: 7/9/1984 From: NTSB

Response:

The Safety Board will withhold further comment on these two Safety Recommendations pending the FAA's review of comments on NPRM No. 83-15. The Safety Board wishes to be kept informed of the progress of NPRM No. 83-15 and has classified Safety Recommendations A-83-80 and -81 as "Open--Acceptable Alternate Action." The Safety Board notes that the closing date for public comments for NPRMs No. 83-14 and No. 83-15 was February 8, 1984. The Safety Board trusts that the FAA will complete its review of the public comments so that the final ruling can be promulgated as soon as possible.

Response Date: 6/11/1985 From: Addressee

Response:

FAA LTR: ALSO, AS NOTED IN OUR LETTER DATED JANUARY 27, 1984, WE ADVISED THE BOARD THAT THE CURRENT FAA SAFETY REGULATIONS REQUIRE THAT ALL PASSENGERS BE ORALLY BRIEFED BY A CREWMEMBER ON AT LEAST THE FOLLOWING CABIN SAFETY INFORMATION ITEMS: THE LOCATION OF EMERGENCY EXITS, SMOKING, THE USE OF SAFETY BELTS, THE LOCATION AND USE OF ANY REQUIRED EMERGENCY FLOTATION MEANS, THE PROPER STORAGE OF ALL CARRY-ON BAGGAGE, SECURITY OF SEAT TRAYS AND SEAT BACKS, AND THE USE OF THE EMERGENCY OXYGEN SYSTEM, ETC. IN ADDITION, THESE SAME INFORMATION ITEMS MUST BE DEPICTED ON PASSENGER BRIEFING CARDS. THESE REQUIRED BRIEFINGS COVER A BROAD SPECTRUM OF SAFETY-RELATED ITEMS THAT, IF ADDED TO, MAY MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE AVERAGE PASSENGER TO ASSIMILATE AND RETAIN. WE DO NOT CONCUR WITH RECOMMENDATION A-83-81, AS IT IS NOT FEASIBLE OR PRACTICAL TO REQUIRE ADDITIONAL ITEMS IN THE ALREADY EXTENSIVE ORAL BRIEFING.

Response Date: 9/12/1985 From: NTSB

Response:

The Safety Board has carefully considered your response and believes that there is merit to the FAA's opinion that the addition of more information to the oral briefings possibly could overwhelm the ability of the average passenger to assimilate and retain the more critical information. Additionally, as the FAA chose to require floor proximity lighting rather than to require tactile markings as recommended by the Safety Board, there is less need for passengers to be informed of this equipment which is optional to the carriers. However, we believe that the briefing cards should contain information on the floor

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proximity emergency escape path markings that are to be installed in all transport category airplanes. It is imperative, in the event of an emergency that the passengers have some information as to the purpose for the lighted floor escape paths installed to assist them in evacuating the aircraft. The Safety Board requests that the FAA reevaluate the need for depicting the positions of the floor proximity emergency escape path markings on the passenger briefing cards. Pending further correspondence on this issue, Safety Recommendation A-83-81 has been classified as "Open--Acceptable Action." Your efforts to improve aviation safety are appreciated.

Response Date: 7/28/1986 From: Addressee

Response:

THE FAA AGREES THAT BRIEFING CARDS SHOULD CONTAIN INFORMATION ON THE FLOOR PROXIMITY ESCAPE PATH MARKINGS WHICH ARE TO BE INSTALLED IN TRANSPORT CATEGORY AIRCRAFT. AC 121-24A, "PASSENGER SAFETY INFORMATION BRIEFING AND BRIEFING CARDS," IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING AMENDED. THE FAA WILL INCLUDE IN THAT AC, GUIDANCE WHICH RECOMMENDS THAT PASSENGERS BE BRIEFED ON, AND BRIEFING CARDS WHICH CONTAIN, INFORMATION THAT POINTS OUT FLOOR PROXIMITY ESCAPE PATH MARKINGS. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE AC WILL BE ISSUED BY DECEMBER 1986, AND A COPY WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE BOARD SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

Response Date: 10/27/1986 From: NTSB

Response:

In its letter of September 12, 1985, the Board agreed that the requirement for emergency floor proximity illumination was an acceptable action versus the installation of tactile markers. However, the Board notes that the FAA's proposed Advisory Circular (AC) would not comply with the intent of this recommendation as an AC only provides guidance and is nonmandatory. The Safety Board continues to believe that emergency exit indicators, whether floor proximity lights or tactile markers, can, following an accident, be critical to passenger survival and therefore should be required as part of the oral briefing and contained on the briefing cards. Pending further correspondence, Recommendation A-83-81 has been classified as "Open--Unacceptable Action." Additionally, the Board notes that some airlines have, at their option, installed tactile markers. Although tactile markers are not required, the Safety Board believes that on aircraft so equipped this information should be conveyed to passengers. Therefore the Safety Board requests that passenger briefings and briefing cards include information on tactile markers where equipped.

Response Date: 5/24/1988 From: Addressee

Response:

TACTILE MARKERS ARE NOT REQUIRED UNDER THE FARs AND ARE NOT UNIFORMLY USED BY THE INDUSTRY. TO REQUIRE BRIEFINGS AND

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DEPICTIONS ON THE TACTILE MARKERS WOULD CONFUSE PASSENGERS AS THEY TRAVEL ON DIFFERENT CARRIERS AND AIRPLANES. SINCE THE ISSUANCE OF THIS SAFETY RECOMMENDATION, THE FAA HAS AMENDED ITS REGULATIONS TO REQUIRE THAT TRANSPORT CATEGORY AIRPLANES BE EQUIPPED WITH FLOOR PROXIMITY WARNING LIGHTS. THE FAA BELIEVES THAT BRIEFING AIRLINE PASSENGERS ON THE PRESENCE OF FLOOR PROXIMITY LIGHTING IS A GOOD SAFETY PRACTICE AND SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED. ON 3/30/88, THE FAA ISSUED ACTION NOTICE 8430.16, PASSENGER BRIEFING ON FLOOR PROXIMITY LIGHTING, REQUESTING THAT PRINCIPAL OPERATIONS INSPECTORS NOTIFY THEIR ASSIGNED PART 121 CERTIFICATE HOLDERS THAT INCLUDING A PASSENGER BRIEFING ON FLOOR PROXIMITY LIGHTING IN THEIR PROCEDURES IS A GOOD SAFETY PRACTICE. I HAVE ENCLOSED A COPY OF THE ACTION NOTICE FOR THE BOARD'S INFORMATION. I CONSIDER THE FAA'S ACTION COMPLETED, AND I PLAN NO FURTHER ACTION ON THIS RECOMMENDATION.

Response Date: 7/28/1988 From: NTSB

Response:

We are pleased to note that in response to this recommendation, Section 121.310(c)(3) of the Federal Aviation Regulations now requires the installation of floor proximity emergency escape path marking, and that Part 121 certificate holders have been notified to include passenger briefing on floor proximity lighting in their procedures. This recommendation is now classified as "Closed--Acceptable Alternate Action."