

Docket No. SA-530

Exhibit No. 2 - F

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Washington, D.C.

FAA Letter of March 10, 2008 Concerning

Safety Recommendations A-07-111 and -112

(2 Pages)



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

800 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

REC'D APR 14 2008
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NOT: 7690A

MAR 10 2008

The Honorable Mark V. Rosenker
Chairman, National Transportation
Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, SW.
Washington, DC 20594

Dear Chairman Rosenker:

This is in response to Safety Recommendations A-07-111 and -112 issued by the Board on December 21, 2007. In those recommendations the Board stated that Helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS) flights typically operate under visual flight rules (VFR) and at low altitudes. When flying during night conditions, HEMS pilots must be especially diligent in avoiding controlled flight into terrain (CFIT) because a lack of visual ground references during night flight can render a pilot susceptible to visual illusions and other conditions that can make it difficult to judge the helicopter's altitude and actual height above the terrain. Helicopter pilots flying at low altitudes would have little time to recognize and recover from such illusions or other disorienting factors that could place them at risk of CFIT. A pilot's reliance on cockpit instruments, particularly radar altimeters (also known as radio altimeters), combined with an outside visual scan, is imperative during night flight to ensure the flight's safe altitude above terrain.

A-07-111. Require helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS) operators to install radar altimeters in all helicopters used in HEMS night operations.

A-07-112. Ensure that the minimum equipment lists for helicopters used in helicopter emergency medical services operations require that radar altimeters be operable during flights conducted at night.

FAA Comment. The Federal Aviation Administration agrees with the intent of these recommendations and is considering rulemaking to require all part 135 HEMS operators, conducting night HEMS operations, to have an operable radar altimeter installed in the helicopter. This project will be considered by the FAA Rulemaking Council in the next few months. We will provide the Board with an update in 180 days.

I will keep the Board informed of the FAA's progress on these safety recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Sturgell", written in a cursive style.

Robert A. Sturgell
Acting Administrator