

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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ISSUED July 14, 1980

Forwarded to:

Honorable Langhorne M. Bond
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Washington, D.C. 20591

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

A-80-59 and -60

On October 31, 1979, Western Airlines, Inc., McDonnell Douglas DC-10-10, N-903WA, crashed at Mexico City International Airport, Mexico. Although the aircraft was cleared for a Tepexpan arrival and was advised that the landing runway was 23R, the crew continued the approach to runway 23L, which had been closed for repairs. The aircraft struck heavy equipment on runway 23L as the crew attempted to execute a missed approach. Of the 76 passengers and 13 crewmembers aboard, 61 passengers and 11 crewmembers were fatally injured, and 13 passengers and 2 crewmembers were seriously injured. One person on the ground was fatally injured.

The crew was advised on at least four occasions by either Mexico City Air Route Traffic Control Center or the tower that they were to land on runway 23R. However, none of these air traffic control (ATC) communications contained phraseology similar to that used in United States ATC communications regarding a sidestep maneuver. 1/ The investigation revealed that both pilots knew that runway 23L was closed and that each had landed aircraft at the airport while the runway was closed.

The Safety Board believes that a good graphic presentation of the sidestep maneuver on the approach chart would have aided the crew. Nowhere on standard United States' approach charts is the complete maneuver portrayed, nor is the word "sidestep" shown. The procedure is shown as a straight-in approach to an adjacent runway, as a circling approach to the sidestep runway, or as a note at the bottom of the chart giving ceiling and visibility minima. In the accident case, the Mexico City chart for runway 23 right contained only ceiling and visibility minima.

1/ A visual alignment maneuver required of a pilot executing an approach to one runway while cleared to land on a parallel runway.

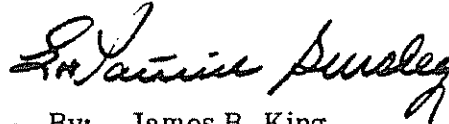
The Safety Board believes that a separate instrument approach chart is needed for the 33 airport runways that utilize the sidestep maneuver in the United States. In addition, we believe there is a need to publish more information on sidestep maneuver procedures.

Accordingly, the Safety Board recommends that the Federal Aviation Administration:

Revise FAA Handbook 8260.19 to require that separate standardized instrument approach charts be published for all airport approaches that require a sidestep maneuver. These charts should clearly indicate the airport approach plan view, the profile view, and the landing minima required. (Class II, Priority Action) (A-80-59)

Publish an Advisory Circular, or amend an existing Advisory Circular, to disseminate information on the sidestep maneuver procedures, terminal ATC communication procedures, radar separation and equipment requirements, and landing minima applicable to the use of the sidestep maneuver by American air carriers at both domestic and foreign airports. (Class I, Urgent Action) (A-80-60)

KING, Chairman, DRIVER, Vice Chairman, McADAMS, GOLDMAN, and BURSLEY, Members, concurred in these recommendations.



By: James B. King
Chairman

