

March 10, 2020

The Honorable Stephen Dickson
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Washington, DC 20591

The attached letter from the NTSB Chairman provides information about the NTSB's February 13, 2020, report *2013–2017 Update to Drug Use Trends in Aviation*, SS-20/01. The details of this accident investigation and the resulting safety recommendations may be found in the attached report, which can also be accessed at <http://www.nts.gov>.

The NTSB is vitally interested in these recommendations because they are designed to prevent accidents and save lives. We would appreciate a response within 90 days of the date of this letter, detailing the actions you have taken or intend to take to implement these recommendations. When replying, please refer to the safety recommendations by number (for example, A-20-12). We encourage you to submit your response to ExecutiveSecretariat@nts.gov. If your reply exceeds 20 megabytes, including attachments, please e-mail us at the same address for instructions on how to send larger documents. Please do not submit both an electronic copy and a hard copy of the same response.



Executive Secretariat-crb
Executive Secretariat
Office of the Managing Director
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20594

Tel: (202) 314-6403
Email: ExecutiveSecretariat@nts.gov



Office of the Chairman

National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, DC 20594

March 10, 2020

The Honorable Stephen Dickson
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Dickson:

This letter provides information about the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) February 13, 2020, report, *2013–2017 Update to Drug Use Trends in Aviation*, SS-20/01. The details of this safety research report and the resulting safety recommendations may be found in the attached report, which can also be accessed at <http://www.nts.gov>.

As a result of this research, we identified the following safety issues:

- The ongoing need for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to publicize—for pilots' use—information about marijuana given its decriminalization in several states and its unchanged classification as an illicit drug per federal law.
- The continued need for the FAA to conduct research to assess the relationship between drug use and accident risk.

Accordingly, the NTSB makes the following safety recommendation to the FAA. Additional information regarding this recommendation can be found in the noted section of the report.

- Revise the *Aeronautical Information Manual* and the *Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge*, FAA-H-8083-25B, to explicitly state marijuana's classification as an illicit drug per federal law and, thus, its prohibited use by airmen. (A-20-12) (See section 4.2.)

In addition, the NTSB reiterates the following recommendation to the FAA:

- Conduct a study to assess the prevalence of over-the-counter, prescription, and illicit drug use among flying pilots not involved in accidents, and compare those results with findings from pilots who have died from aviation accidents to assess the safety risks of using those drugs while flying. (A-14-95) (See section 4.3.)

In the same report, we also classified one previously issued safety recommendation to the FAA:

- Develop, publicize, and periodically update information to educate pilots about the potentially impairing drugs identified in your toxicology test results of fatally injured pilots, and make pilots aware of less impairing alternative drugs if they are available. (A-14-92, classified “Closed—Acceptable Action” in section 4.1.)

The NTSB is vitally interested in these recommendations because they are designed to prevent accidents and save lives. We would appreciate a response within 90 days of the date of this letter, detailing the actions you have taken or intend to take to implement these recommendations. When replying, please refer to the safety recommendations by number (Safety Recommendations A-20-12, A-14-95, A-14-92). We encourage you to submit your response to ExecutiveSecretariat@ntsb.gov. If your reply, including attachments, exceeds 20 megabytes, please e-mail us at the same address for instructions. Please do not submit both an electronic copy and a hard copy of the same response.

Sincerely,

[Original Signed]

Robert L. Sumwalt, III
Chairman