

20. Aviation stands to benefit from information derived from weather satellites. Accordingly, it is considered that special efforts should be made to devise refined techniques and procedures for providing aviation-oriented weather satellite information on a national basis.

21. The terminal forecasting program should be expanded. Terminal forecasts are currently available on a routine basis for only about 5 percent of the airports in the United States.

22. There continues to be a need for improved delineation of aviation forecast area boundaries. A revision of the present system of delineation should be considered in order to define more precisely the area boundaries—perhaps a reassignment of areas of forecast responsibility to make the boundaries contiguous with State boundaries.

23. We adhere to the belief that a centralized clear air turbulence (CAT) forecasting center should be established, similar to the severe local storms (SELS) unit. Certainly safety, efficiency, and economy would be enhanced by such an establishment.

24. Continued efforts should be made to improve the procedures for obtaining and disseminating inflight weather information.

25. We are concerned with instructions to forecasters regarding the modifiers to be used for inflight advisories (SIGMETs) containing clear air turbulence (CAT) forecasts. Forecasters are directed to use the phrase "moderate or greater" in CAT forecasts and may only use "severe" or "extreme" in CAT reports. These instructions (in chapter D-22 of the Weather Bureau Operations Manual) appear to be contrary to preceding instructions (in that manual) which call for SIGMETs to be issued when (among other things) "severe" or "extreme" turbulence are expected. Unfortunately, "moderate or more turbulence" includes all intensities except "light." Furthermore, it seems unfair and certainly not very helpful to the pilot not to be apprised of the forecasters' thinking and intent in regard to the category of turbulence to be anticipated.

26. There has always been a requirement for more accurate aviation weather forecasts, particularly for the terminal area, and research into improved forecasting methods should continue to be pursued. Research should also be conducted to develop objective methods for measuring or forecasting the intensity of icing and turbulence.

MARCH 14, 1968.

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DEAR GENERAL MCKEE: The Safety Board has become increasingly aware in recent months of the very rapid expansion in the operations of the air-taxi operators, and within that group a similar burst of activity on the part of the scheduled air-taxi operators.

Also of interest to us, and in the same general area, is the rapidly expanding use of such operators by the Post Office Department in the contract carriage of mail.

A description of the nature and present scope of the operations of this group will serve as a background against which the safety of such operations, a matter of real concern to the Safety Board, can be appraised.

There are, as you know, more than 3,800 air-taxi operators in the United States. As of October 1, 1967, scheduled air-taxi operators totaled 165, an increase of 42 percent over the 116 reported only 11 months before. Another indication of the rapid rate of growth of this segment of the industry can be gleaned from the fact that there were only 12 scheduled air-taxi operators 4 years ago, and that during the same period the number of aircraft utilized by them increased from 72 to 685.

Although this figure may not be entirely precise, it is our information that during the calendar year 1967 scheduled air-taxi operators carried over 3 million passengers.

It is worthy of note that at least two certificated airlines have contracted with scheduled air-taxi operators to operate a segment of the certificated carriers' routes and that there are some 42 interline agreements between certificated airlines and scheduled air-taxi operators for the onward carriage of airline passengers.

In this connection, it is also worthy of note that in the contractual arrangements for the operation of route segments by air-taxi operators there are no affirmative references to the safety of such operations (other than requirements