



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Research and  
Special Programs  
Administration**

400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

**JUN - 3 2003**

The Honorable Ellen G. Engleman  
Chairman  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, DC 20594

Dear Chairman Engleman:

This letter provides an update on Safety Recommendation A-98-80 issued by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA). On September 5, 1996, a Federal Express aircraft enroute from Memphis, Tennessee to Boston, Massachusetts made an emergency landing at Stewart International Airport in Newburg, New York, after flightcrew members reported smoke in the cabin cargo compartment. Emergency response personnel suspected that hazardous materials were on board the aircraft but did not receive specific information during the incident to respond adequately. After completion of its investigation, NTSB issued the following recommendation to RSPA:

**Safety Recommendation A-98-80:**

Require, within 2 years, that air carriers transporting hazardous materials have the means, 24 hours per day, to quickly retrieve and provide consolidated specific information about the identity (including proper shipping name), hazard class, quantity, number of packages, and location of all hazardous materials on an airplane in a timely manner to emergency responders.

**RSPA Action:**

On March 25, 2003 RSPA published a final rule under docket HM-206C, entitled "Hazardous Materials: Availability of Information for Hazardous Materials Transported by Aircraft." A copy of the final rule is enclosed. The final rule adopts revisions to the Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR) to insure that emergency response personnel have accurate and timely information regarding hazardous materials aboard an aircraft, in the event of an emergency.

RSPA amended the HMR to require aircraft operators transporting a hazardous material to: (1) place a telephone number, on the notification of pilot-in-command or in the



cockpit of the aircraft, that can be contacted during an in-flight emergency to obtain information about any hazardous materials aboard the aircraft; (2) retain and provide upon request a copy of the notification of pilot-in-command, or the information contained in it, at the aircraft operator's principal place of business, or the airport of departure, for 90 days, and at the airport of departure until the flight leg is completed; and (3) make readily accessible, and provide upon request, a copy of the notification of pilot-in-command, or the information contained in it, at the planned airport of arrival until the flight leg is completed.

Based on publication of the HM-206C final rule, we request that this recommendation be reclassified as "Closed Acceptable Action." We thank you for your consideration of this request.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Ms. Patricia Klinger, Director of External Communications, at (202) 366-4831.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. G. BONASSO', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Samuel G. Bonasso  
Acting Administrator

Enclosure