

Beechcraft Safety Communique

October 1995

TO ALL AVIATION CENTERS, INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTORS, OPERATORS AND OWNERS OF RECORD FOR ALL BEECH AIRPLANE MODELS:

SUBJECT: CABIN DOOR, BAGGAGE DOOR, ENGINE COWLING AND FUEL CAP LATCHING AND SECURITY

Beech Aircraft Corporation continues to receive reports of accidents following the opening of a cabin door, baggage door, engine cowlings, or fuel cap during takeoff or flight. In many cases, the pilot failed to make certain the cabin door, baggage door, engine cowlings, or fuel cap was properly latched and secured during pre-flight. In each accident, the pilot also failed to properly control the airplane and the airplane stalled at low altitude.

THESE ACCIDENTS SHOULD NOT HAPPEN!!

It is the pilot's responsibility to verify that cabin doors, baggage doors, engine cowlings and fuel caps have been latched securely. It is essential to complete the "Preflight Checklist", and "Before Takeoff" or "Line Up Check" procedures listed in the applicable airplane flight manual to be certain that all doors, engine cowlings and fuel caps are latched and secure.

NOTE

Beech Aircraft Corporation has periodically issued Class I Service Instructions and Mandatory Service Bulletins which address door latching. Beech Aircraft Corporation considers compliance with Service Instructions and Service Bulletins on such subjects to be mandatory for all affected airplanes.

If a cabin door, baggage door, or engine cowlings is not properly latched and secured, it will usually open during takeoff immediately before or at rotation, although there have been reports of unlatched doors and engine cowlings opening in cruise flight. On some models, additional noise is to be expected. Items which are not properly tied down may be drawn out of the baggage compartment. An open nose baggage door or engine cowlings may be visible to the pilot. Do not permit yourself to be distracted. **ALWAYS MAINTAIN CONTROL OF THE AIRPLANE.** There may be a reduction in climb performance, but the airplane can be flown to pattern altitude and landed safely using normal approach procedures.

An open nose baggage door will not directly interfere with the propeller blades on any Beech model except the Queen Air. The Queen Air propeller blades will slice through the open nose baggage door, but little damage to the propeller blades would be expected. However, if baggage or other items are drawn out, they could strike the propeller blades and cause significant damage. **ALWAYS SECURE BAGGAGE** in the nose baggage compartment.

Reports indicate that an improperly secured fuel cap will come off at or near rotation, and may be accompanied by the sight of a large plume of fuel escaping from the wing. The fuel cap, if still connected to its chain, will bang against the

wing, making a loud noise. The sight of fuel escaping from the wing may be startling; however, there is no reason to panic. **MAINTAIN CONTROL OF THE AIRPLANE AND LAND AS SOON AS PRACTICAL.** Although the size of the plume makes it appear that large amounts of fuel are being siphoned from the tank, sufficient fuel should remain to fly a normal pattern to return for landing. Beech has never received a report of ignition of siphoning fuel during flight or after landing; however, caution is advised during taxi and shutdown.

If, upon takeoff, a cabin door, baggage door, or engine cowling opens, or if a fuel cap comes off, reject the takeoff if runway distance and other conditions permit. If the takeoff cannot be safely rejected, **FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION ON FLYING THE AIRPLANE FIRST.** Accelerate to and maintain normal pattern airspeed. Continue to climb out, straight ahead if possible, to pattern altitude. Make shallow turns. Do not exceed 30° of bank. On twin engine airplanes, there is no need to shut down an engine and feather the propeller unless engine performance or major vibration problems confirm the need. Land as conditions permit. **MAINTAIN AT LEAST THE APPROACH AND LANDING SPEEDS RECOMMENDED IN THE AIRPLANE FLIGHT MANUAL TO PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE MARGIN ABOVE STALL SPEED.** Some additional power may be required to compensate for increased drag with an open door or engine cowl- ing.

Have the door, engine cowling or fuel cap checked for damage by a licensed mechanic.

Remember, airplanes have been flown safely in all of the situations described in this Safety Communique. If you encounter one of these situations, fly the airplane in a normal manner and maintain airspeed and control for a safe landing.