



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

SAFO

Safety Alert for Operators

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Flight Standards Service
Washington, DC

http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/safo

A SAFO contains important safety information and may include recommended action. SAFO content should be especially valuable to air carriers in meeting their statutory duty to provide service with the highest possible degree of safety in the public interest. Besides the specific action recommended in a SAFO, an alternative action may be as effective in addressing the safety issue named in the SAFO.

Subject: Safety Recommendation Concerning Piper PA-23 and PA-31 Series Nose Baggage Doors

Purpose: Provide operators of Piper PA-23 and 31 series aircraft with recommendations for preventing the forward baggage door from opening in flight.

Background: January 5, 2008, a Piper PA-31-350 crashed, fatally injuring 6 passengers, and injuring 4 passengers. August 17, 2001, a pilot aborted a takeoff due to a warning light. November 27, 1997, a PA-23-250 crashed on takeoff, fatally injuring 4 passengers. May 24, 1996, a Piper PA-31-350 crashed injuring 4 passengers. April 16, 1990, a Piper PA-31-350 crashed shortly after takeoff. January 17, 1982, a Piper PA-31T crashed after takeoff. What do these accidents have in common? They all involved the inadvertent opening of the nose baggage door either during take-off or during flight.

Discussion: Over time, the nose baggage doors latches can become worn or damaged. For the PA-23, PA-31 and PA-31T, Piper Aircraft Service Bulletin 604A attempted to address this situation by addressing the installation of two (2) rivets, part number 22613-00, to hold the two latch arms (forward arm assembly and aft arm assembly) in place. This service bulletin also warns, "However, it is possible to close the door and turn the lock to the locked position without the lock tang actually engaging the door handle. As a result, the door would not be properly secured and could possibly come open in flight; this could adversely affect the flight characteristics of the airplane."

Note: FAA Aircraft Certification is currently working with Piper Aircraft to develop additional certification requirements pertaining to this issue. Until such time as the additional requirements are published, operators should consider the recommendations contained herein.

Recommendations: Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations, part 135 Directors of Operations, Chief Pilots, Pilots, training centers and instructors involved in the operation or training in Piper PA-23 and PA-31 series aircraft should become familiar with and consider adopting the recommendations contained in the supplement located at the following link:

http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/safo/all_safos/media/2008/SAFO08013SUP.pdf

Document Cancellations: This SAFO does not supersede any past, present, or future, Airworthiness Directives or aircraft manufacture's Service Bulletin, but rather assists air carriers in operating at the highest levels of safety when identified safety concerns are identified.

Questions: For any questions pertaining to this SAFO, please contact the Air Transportation Division's part 135 Air Carrier Operations Branch, AFS-250 at (202) 267-8166.