

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
DIRECTOR OF AIR COMMERCE  
Washington

June 12, 1935

Memorandum to the Secretary:

Subject: Comments Subsequent to TWA Accident

The following shows progress being made for safer air travel both by regulating and aids to air navigation:

1. The installation of instrument (blind) approach facilities, after years of development and testing by the Department of Commerce is being expected at major air terminals, and air line planes will be required to be equipped with radio compasses or the equivalent as soon as possible. The necessary radio approach equipment has been on order since November, 1934. It is hoped that the requests for funds submitted months ago for clearing approaches to terminals will be granted. This will result in greater safety in landing during bad weather.
2. The Department of Commerce will expedite the contemplated licensing of air line dispatchers to replace the recently adopted and present system of approval, and will designate and define the duties and responsibilities of such dispatchers.
3. The terminal traffic control studies of the Department of Commerce and the air lines which have been continuing for a number of months, when completed and become operative, will add to the safeguards in situations such as this.
4. A clear and complete interpretation of the existing fuel reserve regulations will be conveyed to all air line personnel, and the Department of Commerce will consider the adoption of a proportional fuel reserve regulation to apply to long-distance flights. In any event, the existing forty-five minute reserve fuel rule shall be retained as a minimum.
5. The policy permitting the issuance of a waiver of the 8-hour per day flight time limitation for pilots, which has been in effect for a period of years, has been rescinded, and further study will be devoted to this regulation with particular reference to its application to long-distance flying and hours of duty.
6. The simultaneous transmission of radio communication and radio direction signals, similar to that provided and being tested by the Department of Commerce Experimental Station at Pittsburgh, Pa., is being installed at terminal airports.
7. The Department of Commerce will provide for the inspection of aircraft radio installation and maintenance by especially qualified inspectors, in addition to its present staff of air line and air line maintenance inspectors.
8. The Department of Commerce will again request funds for larger aircraft development work. The new Development Section of the Bureau has made most gratifying progress during the past year in developing safer and easier controlled small planes. Certain principles are adaptable to the larger air line aircraft for increasing their safety in maneuvering and landing, but the present allotment is insufficient to experiment with larger planes.

9. Naturally, the existence of more airports is of importance to any pilot in distress. While hundreds of airports were constructed last year with Public Works funds, requests for the construction of many more fields have been made by the Department of Commerce.

10. Even though an improved airways system might not have prevented the accident, it should be mentioned at this time that several millions of dollars allotted the Department of Commerce by the Public Works Administration were spent last year in improving or extending the airways system, and it is hoped that the requests of the Bureau of last winter for additional emergency funds for further airways improvements will be granted.

(Signed) Eugene L. Vidal  
Director of Air Commerce