



SAIB: CE-10-35

SUBJ: Loose Equipment in the Flight Compartment and on Glare Shields

Date: May 24, 2010

This is information only. Recommendations aren't mandatory.

Introduction

This Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin is being issued to remind owners, operators, and installers of potential hazards and airworthiness concerns related to having loose equipment in the flight compartment; particularly items placed on the glare shield. It was prompted by a recent event on a Mitsubishi MU-2B, applies to all aircraft that have a glare shield installed above the instrument panel, and is of particular concern to aircraft with windshield heating systems where the power terminal strips may be exposed and subject to an electrical short from a foreign object placed on the glare shield.

The airworthiness concern does not address an unsafe condition that would warrant airworthiness directive (AD) action under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) Part 39.

Background

During recent flight on a Mitsubishi MU-2B, thick black smoke filled the cockpit and the crew was forced to make an emergency landing. It was discovered that a hand-held GPS receiver and antenna had been set on the glare shield. A metallic portion of the GPS antenna inadvertently made contact across the windshield heater terminal strips, resulting in an electrical short circuit. The resulting current flow caused the loose equipment to burn, resulting in smoke in the cockpit.

Recommendations

The FAA reminds owners and operators of aircraft that loose equipment on the glare shield or in the cockpit can present a hazard, particularly for aircraft with a windshield heater system installed where electrical terminal strips may be exposed and subject to short circuit. Owners and operators should recognize the potential for exposed terminal strips to be attached to high current windshield heating systems and refrain from placing any loose items on the glare shield that might cause an electrical short and subsequent electrical fire. If possible, these terminal strips should also be insulated or covered to mitigate such an occurrence.

The FAA also reminds owners and operators that loose or portable equipment on the glare shield can obscure the field of view of the crew, can potentially influence the magnetic compass accuracy, and can become a hazard in turbulence. Owners and operators should secure loose or portable items and equipment properly prior to and during the flight, should isolate portable or loose equipment from other equipment installed, and should ensure the magnetic compass is not affected by any magnetic or electrical influence from portable or loose equipment.

For Further Information Contact

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