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For a full list of events see
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Single engines? No thank you

Am I missing something here? In reading the debate about single-engine instrument flight rules (SEIFR) operations, I find a growing sense of disbelief.

The probability statistics of failure for a modern turbine engine is hardly the issue.

On a black night, in bad weather, on a twin when one engine fails there is a 100% probability of having power remaining from the other engine.

In a single-engined aircraft, there is a 0% probability. The aircraft is going down, instrument flight rules, complete with passengers, beginning right now.

Even if some fantastically complicated set of conditions is imposed, eg within gliding distance of an alternate at all times, not over remote terrain or water, not over built-up areas, etc, I can see no justification for gambling with fare paying passengers in this way.

Whether the pilot feels lucky tonight should never be on a minimum equipment list.

Where next? The Boeing 7E7 with only one engine because the stats are good?

Peter Johnson
Gloucester, UK

SAFETY

ILS errors: where is the data?

It is remarkable that it is only recently that the possibility of ILS errors has been communicated – especially when you consider the venerable age of instrument landing system technology (developed in the early 1930s). Category III was achieved in the late 1960s – yet problems appear only now?

The problem with ILS errors, as with all ground and airborne failures, is the lack of freely available incident data.

ILS is a mature technology, but as with all technology, as it advances, some of the more basic lessons need to be relearned.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to learn lessons from incidents due to the lack of availability of data and the unwillingness of operators to share that data.

The UK has a mandatory occurrence reporting system which was extended some time ago to include ground engineering failures. But the volume of data is small, giving the impression that incidents are rare – which is not the case. Access to what little data exists is possible – but with restrictions, and under supervision. Many countries do not even record such data and rarely make it available if they do.

One wonders why? Aviation claims to be safety conscious, but actually maintains a "safety culture" more fitting to the Cold War years. It is time the walls were knocked down and the culture of secrecy banished to the past where it belongs.

Kim O'Neil

Managing Director, Advanced Aviation Technology, Compton, UK

Pride to blame in Caribbean

Harmonisation of aviation legislation, combined with the refusal to work together, is one of the main problems in Caribbean aviation. A reason for this lack of co-operation is national pride, as mentioned in your article "Trouble in paradise" (*Flight International*, 8-14 April).

Most island governments would rather not see other Caribbean national carriers penetrate into their own (domestic) markets. The "I am the boss" mentality will not permit it.

This may not be a good thing, but it can be explained. The Caribbean islands are small compared to mainland countries. Their markets are small and most islands don't have a healthy economy. This explains why the governments are over-protective of their own markets.

Competition only makes it harder to increase the domestic income of the islands. Most Caribbean airlines are government owned. In some cases such government-owned airlines are seen as a social workplace rather than a competitive business-oriented company.

In some Caribbean regions there are too many small airlines. An example is the five islands of the

Netherlands Antilles, all trying to start separate airlines. Privatisation and/or forming one larger airline might help to make these smaller airlines emulate Dutch Caribbean Airlines of Curaçao, formed after the bankruptcy of Air ALM, and now making a small profit.

Roger Cannegieter

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

No smoke without fire

David Learmount's synopsis of the Transportation Safety Board of Canada's report on the 1998 Swiss Air Boeing MD-11 accident (*Flight International*, 8-14 April) reminded me of a flight I made in 1997 from Dublin to Brussels.

Just after take-off we had smoke in the cockpit and the captain ordered the flight engineer to initiate fuel dumping at 1,500ft (460m) and we were back on the ground within 6min. Cargo and smoke detectors failed to detect the source, but a few weeks later it was found to be from an autopilot servo under the flying officer's yoke.

This told me that there is no smoke without fire, sparks or heat, all of which in isolation or combination are detrimental to continued flight and time wasted in trying to locate and isolate its source