



SUBJ: Doors

This is information only. Recommendations aren't mandatory.

Introduction

This Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin (SAIB) alerts you of an airworthiness concern for amateur built experimental airplanes where a loss of directional control could occur during an emergency landing due to lack of a positive canopy latching device.

Background

The NTSB investigated a non-fatal accident, Identification No. NYC06CA021, and their findings are: The pilot had completed construction of the amateur built airplane, and was in the process of initial flight testing. The pilot had accumulated 4 hours of total flight time in the accident airplane. Prior to the accident flight, the pilot secured the side-opening canopy by engaging three interconnected 1/4-inch pins, into three 1/4-inch mating sleeves. Except for a significant amount of friction between the pins and mating surfaces, there was no locking mechanism for the canopy. Although the pilot did not experience any difficulties during several prior flights, the canopy opened during the initial climb of the accident flight, about 500 feet above ground level. When the canopy opened fully, the airplane became uncontrollable. Due to airflow over the canopy, the pilot was unable to refasten the pins, and had to hold the canopy closed with his hands. The pilot was able to partially control the airplane, and perform an emergency landing on a 5,602-foot-long, 100-foot-wide, asphalt runway. During the landing, the airplane departed the left side of the runway and struck a berm. The aircraft was substantially damaged and the pilot was seriously injured.

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows:

A loss of directional control during an emergency landing. A factor in the accident was an unlatched canopy requiring the pilot to hold it closed to maintain aircraft control.

Recommendation

While the design and construction of amateur built airplanes are not covered by any airworthiness standards, the FAA recommends inspection of all experimental amateur built aircraft for a positive canopy latching device.

For Further Information Contact

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