

NTSB Targets Fataals

General aviation's lack of progress in reducing the fatal accident rate has not gone unnoticed by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). General aviation safety has been on the Board's "10 most wanted" list for several years now, and the NTSB in March issued five "safety alerts" focusing on "the most frequent types of general aviation accidents" (see the June 2013 *Aviation Safety*).

Board member Dr. Earl Weener serves as the agency's focal point on the general aviation fatal accident problem, and he has been vocal on the need to address it. I have been emphasizing the flat accident rate for some time, but Weener Weener has gone a step further, highlighting variations in the fatal accident rate by category of general aviation.

He points out that the fatal accident rate for the personal segment of general aviation actually has been increasing significantly over the last 15 or so years. It's rare for Board members to be so vocally active, yet Dr. Weener has appeared at a number of aviation conferences and events to get his point across.

In June 2012, the agency held a public seminar on GA safety in Washington, D.C. Numerous presenters agreed with the NTSB's concern about the static fatal accident rate. I was one of these presenters, and my main point was that poor risk management is the root cause of about 75 percent of GA's fatal accidents. I presented a paper and a briefing on the importance of poor risk management in accident causality to the five NTSB board members in a private meeting the day before the seminar. The Board promised it would review all of the presentations and take appropriate action.

The NTSB evidently agreed with my findings. In March 2013, it issued five safety alerts to improve general aviation safety. Significantly, two of these addressed risk management.



NTSB MEMBER WEENER

Earl F. Weener, Ph.D., became the 41st Member of the National Transportation Safety Board on June 30, 2010. His term expires December 31, 2015.

Prior to his appointment to the Board, Weener had a 24-year career with the Boeing Company. During his time with Boeing, he held a series of Chief Engineer positions, including the Airworthiness, Reliability and Maintainability, and Safety organization, the System Engineering organization, and Safety Technology Development. He also served four years in Washington, D.C., as Boeing's Manager of Engineering and Technical Government Affairs. As well, Member Weener was integrally involved in the initial development of the Boeing two-crew 747 flight deck concept and the development of the 757/767 flight decks, the initial advanced technology commercial transport glass cockpit.

Aside from his professional career in aviation, Member Weener is experienced with general aviation. He holds commercial and flight instructor certificates and has worked as a charter pilot. He owns a Beechcraft Bonanza and remains an active general aviation pilot.