



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

800 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20591

June 26, 2012

The Honorable Deborah A.P. Hersman  
Chairman, National Transportation  
Safety Board  
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, SW.  
Washington, DC 20594

Dear Chairman Hersman:

This is in response to Safety Recommendation A-12-8 issued by the Board on April 10, 2012. The Board issued this safety recommendation as a result of an accident that occurred on September 16, 2011, about 1626 Pacific daylight time. During the accident, a modified experimental single-seat North American P-51D, N79111, collided with the airport ramp in the spectator box seat area following a loss of control while maneuvering during the unlimited class gold race at the National Championship Air Races (NCAR) at Reno Stead Airport (RTS), Reno, Nevada. The airplane was registered to Aero-Trans Corp, Ocala, Florida, and operated by the pilot as Race 177, the Galloping Ghost, under the provisions of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 91. The commercial pilot and 10 people on the ground sustained fatal injuries; based on preliminary information, 66 people sustained serious injuries, and numerous minor injuries were reported. The airplane fragmented upon impact with the ramp. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed for the local air race flight, which departed RTS about 10 minutes before the accident.

A-12-8. Revise Federal Aviation Administration Order 8900.1, Flight Standards Information Management System, volume 3, chapter 6, section 1, paragraph 3-151 and Advisory Circular 91-45C, "Waivers: Aviation Events," to correct inaccurate and incomplete information and reconcile all differences and inconsistencies between the documents.

FAA Comment. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) agrees with this recommendation and began drafting in July 2011 a revision to FAA Order 8900.1, Flight Standards Information Management System, with regard to air racing. The draft includes creating a new FAA Order 8900.1, volume 3, chapter 6, section 2, which specifically addresses air races. The information on air races previously contained in FAA Order 8900.1, volume 3, chapter 6, section 1, paragraph 3-151 would be transferred to the new section. We plan to add policy to correct any inaccurate and incomplete information. In conjunction with updating FAA Order 8900.1, we plan to update AC 91-45C, Waivers: Aviation Events, to reflect the new guidance and reconcile any differences or inconsistencies with FAA Order 8900.1.

I will keep the Board informed of the FAA's progress on this safety recommendation and provide an update by June 2013.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Michael P. Huerta", is written over a solid black rectangular redaction box.

Michael P. Huerta  
Acting Administrator