

On balance, there is insufficient evidence to support a conclusion that the captain's having flown *only* DC-8's in the 7 weeks preceding the accident was a contributing factor. Nevertheless, the Board believes that this type of scheduling could potentially lead to a compromise in safety. Accordingly, we note with approval that United **Air** Lines has adopted a procedure whereby pilots who have completed transitional training in a particular aircraft are afforded the opportunity to re-familiarize themselves in another aircraft, in which they had previously been checked out, prior to being assigned flights in the latter aircraft.

2.2 Conclusions

(a) Findings

1. The flightcrew was properly certificated and qualified to conduct the flight.
2. The captain had been transitioning to the DC-8 during the period prior to the accident and had not flown in a B-727 since December 2, 1968.
3. The aircraft was properly certificated and airworthy.
4. The aircraft had been operating for 42 flight hours prior to the accident with the No. 3 generator inoperative, as allowed by the Minimum Equipment List.
5. The discrepancy which caused the No. 3 generator to be rendered inoperative had ~~not~~ been corrected and probably was associated with its electrical control panel.
6. The flight experienced a fire warning on the No. 1 engine during climbout and the engine was shut down.
7. There was no physical evidence in the recovered wreckage indicating that an in-flight fire had occurred.
8. shortly after shutdown of the No. 1 engine, electrical power from the remaining generator (No. 2) was lost.
9. The available evidence does not permit a determination as to the exact cause of the loss of all generator power, other than associating this loss with the sudden placement of **all** three generator bus loads, as well as the essential bus, on the No. 2 generator.

10. Following **loss** of all generator power, the standby electrical system either **was not** activated or failed to function.
11. Electrical power at a voltage level of approximately 50 volts **was** restored approximately a minute and a half after loss of the No. 2 generator.
12. The duration of power restoration **was** 9 to 15 seconds, following which power **was** again lost at some indeterminate point prior to impact.
13. The aircraft was in an ~~abnormal~~ attitude at impact.
14. The No. 2 and No. 3 engines were developing power at impact.
15. There **was** no evidence of a malfunction in the flight control system.
16. The flight **was** conducted under night, instrument conditions.
17. The pilots would have been without a reliable attitude reference, either inside or outside the aircraft, **from** the point in time the No. 2 generator **was** lost until impact.

✓(b) ~~Probable Cause~~

The Board determines **that** the probable cause of this accident **was** loss of attitude orientation during a night, instrument departure in which the attitude instruments were disabled by loss of electrical power. The Board has been unable to determine (a) why all generator power **was** lost or (b) why the standby electrical ~~power~~ system **either was** not activated or failed to function.