FAA
Aviation Safety

SPECIAL AIRWORTHINESS INFORMATION BULLETIN

SAIB: CE-14-22
Date: July 10, 2014

SUBJ: Fuel Selector/Shut-Off Valve

This is information only. Recommendations aren't mandatory.

Introduction

This Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin (SAIB) alerts you, owners and operators of certain **Piper Aircraft, Inc. (Piper) Models PA-28-140, PA-28-150, PA-28-160, PA-28-180, PA-28R-180, and PA-28R-200** airplanes of an airworthiness concern, specifically that the fuel selector valve can be inadvertently switched off and/or may bind when switching fuel tanks and can cause a loss of power in flight. This SAIB also recommends the installation of a fuel selector valve cover designed to prevent inadvertently selecting the off position and the maintenance of fuel selector valves to prevent their binding.

At this time, this airworthiness concern has not been determined to be an unsafe condition that would warrant AD action under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR) part 39.

Background

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has received a report of a pilot inadvertently switching off a fuel selector valve while landing a Piper Model PA-28-180C airplane, in December 2011, resulting in a crash with one serious injury and substantial airplane damage. The incident was attributed to the pilot inadvertently selecting the off position of the fuel selector valve and a lack of fuel selector valve maintenance.

Recommendations

To reduce the possibility of inadvertent shutoff and/or binding of fuel selector valves in flight, we recommend that owners and operators of Piper. Models PA-28-140, PA-28-150, PA-28-160, PA-28-180, PA-28R-180, and PA-28R-200 airplanes:

1. become fully familiar with the operation of their airplane's fuel selector valve:

   a. the clock locations of the left tank, right tank and off positions; and

   b. the feel of a fuel selector valve, when the valve handle is rotated, free from the onset of binding and arresting only at the detent for each tank and off position.

2. replace fuel selector valve covers with a design that utilizes a lockout device for the selection of a valve's off positions, as addressed by Piper Service Bulletin (SB) 840A, dated 7 November 2013; and

3. inspect and maintain fuel selector valves in accordance with Piper SB 355, dated 5 Jun 1972.

To reduce the possibility of a crash when switching a fuel selector valve, ensure a flat landing site is available whenever switching fuel tanks and check before landing to ensure that an airplane's fuel selector valve is positioned on the fullest tank.

For Further Information Contact

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