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**OPERATION OF AIRCRAFT**

**ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS**

**NIGHT FLYING.**

- A Indicates changes
- A1. This AIC replaces AIC 23-2 dated 91-11-15.
2. The Accident Inquiry Board which made an investigation into a fatal aircraft accident which occurred just after a private pilot had taken off from a country airstrip at night, states as follows in its report:-
- "The pilot showed poor technique in that he failed to extinguish his landing lights immediately after take-off. These lights would certainly have rendered the horizon invisible and have placed the pilot in a complete IFR situation, with which he was unqualified to deal - not being instrument rated. While still at a low altitude, and almost immediately after take-off, the pilot spoke on R/T. This action was not consistent with his giving his full attention to instruments during a highly critical phase of the flight. The pilot's previous night-flying training and experience - though his hours totalled thirty - did not, in fact, qualify him to operate out of country airstrips, where light references on the ground were practically non-existent. His experience had been confined to Reef airfields".*
3. Another Accident Inquiry Board which made an investigation into a similar fatal aircraft accident which occurred a couple of years ago when a private pilot was practising night flying on a particularly dark night, also stated as follows in its report:-
- "The Board is of the opinion that on the crosswind leg in a northerly direction there was no clearly distinguishable horizon visible and that the pilot became disorientated whilst endeavouring to locate the navigation light switch. The aircraft commenced to spiral to the right and struck the ground in a right wing down attitude at considerable speed. The Board is of the opinion that the probable cause of the accident was due to spatial disorientation of the pilot, resulting in loss of control during a right hand turn out after take-off at night".*
4. The attention of all pilots is therefore again drawn to the fact that a take-off at night from certain aerodromes which are situated away from towns or cities or other surface light sources, may well be considered as an IFR take-off when no clearly discernable horizon is visible from the cockpit or flight deck. This may apply on a particularly dark, moonless night or on a night with overcast sky and it may also apply only in certain directions of take-off.

**COMMISSIONER FOR CIVIL AVIATION**