

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
198904248**

**Boeing Co  
B727**

**22 October 1989**

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**NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at [www.atsb.gov.au](http://www.atsb.gov.au).**

The Bureau did not conduct an on scene investigation of this occurrence. The information presented below was obtained from information supplied to the Bureau.

**Occurrence Number:** 198904248                      **Occurrence Type:** Incident  
**Location:** Cayley Reef, (IFR)  
**State:** QLD    **Inv Category:** 4  
**Date:** Sunday 22 October 1989  
**Time:** 1405 hours                                      **Time Zone** EST  
**Highest Injury Level:** None

**Aircraft Manufacturer:** Boeing Co  
**Aircraft Model:** 727-277  
**Aircraft Registration:** VH-ANA    **Serial Number:** 22641  
**Type of Operation:** Air Transport Airlines Domestic Passenger Scheduled  
**Damage to Aircraft:** Nil  
**Departure Point:** Cairns QLD  
**Departure Time:** 1346 EST  
**Destination:** Brisbane QLD

**Approved for Release:**

The pilot-in-command is a training captain in the company and he was supervising the line training of a newly recruited captain. After departing Cairns the aircraft was cleared to track direct to the first turning point, Cayley Reef (342 deg 107 NM from Townsville). Other tracking instructions were given during the flight to this point.

When the aircraft was identified on Townsville radar the controller formed the opinion that the aircraft was tracking from Cayley Reef to Townsville instead of to the Goblin position (138 deg 97 NM from Cayley Reef). The aircraft crew were satisfied that they were tracking to Goblin.

A standard instrument flight rules flight plan designator had been changed some time before and it appeared as though the crew may have been following the old flight plan track as applied to the designator in use. The pilot reported that this was not the case. The incident was discussed with the pilot in a productive interview, following the relaxation of previously imposed industrial restrictions on co-operation with the Bureau. When he learned that the purpose of the interview was to assist in finding solutions to the problem, a number of ideas were offered.

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the incident:

1. The aircraft was not tracking as anticipated by the radar controller.
2. Controller's concern regarding the intended track of the aircraft.

Recommendations:

Some changes to standard IFR flight plan designators and routes has taken place recently. On occasions, confusion as to the actual route being flown by an aircraft has arisen. The problem has arisen because totally new designators have not been used. An old name and a new route present the potential for confusion. A similar situation occurred when standard instrument departures were introduced and it was found necessary to adopt totally new names when procedures were altered. A further check can be built in with routine radio calls. At present, a pilot is required to state the aircraft's cleared flight level when changing frequency. The route is considered to be as important and the pilot involved in this incident suggested that the next enroute reporting point be stated as well.

1. That the Civil Aviation Authority consider applying unused designator names to altered standard IFR flight plan routes.
  
  2. That the Civil Aviation Authority consider the introduction of a requirement for pilots to state their next enroute reporting point when changing frequency in controlled airspace, particularly when operating to a standard IFR plan.
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