

## Safety check urged for regional airlines

by UPI

NEW YORK -- Upgraded safety programs are being urged for regional airlines, which have seen a growing percentage of fatal crashes in recent years, it was reported Thursday. Regional carriers had four fatal crashes that killed a total of 85 people over the past five years, USA Today said, quoting federal data. Over the same period, one person died in a major airline crash. Regional airlines were reported slow to adopt safety programs introduced at major airlines in recent years. The National Transportation Safety Board and private safety experts say many have lowered pilot hiring standards because of high turnover. Officials at regional airlines say they run safe operations, fly under the same regulations as large carriers, have spent millions improving safety in recent years and the number of accidents compared with large carriers is a statistical fluke. Regional airlines reportedly account for nearly half of all airline flights and carry more than 20 percent of passengers. Since 2003, there have been four fatal accidents out of more than 24 million regional airline flights, the report says, with no fatal accidents on regionals in the five years prior to 2003.

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