FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 1-98
Friday, January 2, 1998
Contact: Kathryn B. Creedy
Phone: 202-267-8521

FAA Reduces Alcohol Testing Rate for Aviation Industry Employees

WASHINGTON -- Less than one-half of one percent of aviation industry employees working in safety and security-related jobs tested positive for alcohol over the last two years, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reported today.

Because of the low violation rates, the FAA is lowering the current minimum annual random rate for alcohol testing from 25 percent to 10 percent for calendar year 1998. The alcohol violation rate was approximately 0.06 percent for 1995 and approximately 0.08 percent for 1996. The random minimum drug testing rate remains the same at 25 percent.

Random drug and alcohol testing is done on aviation industry personnel performing safety-sensitive duties. Random alcohol testing was first required by the FAA in 1995. The regulation allows the FAA to reduce the alcohol testing rate to 10 percent if data received indicate a violation rate of less than one-half of one percent for two consecutive years.

The fact that there are alcohol violations indicates the need for random testing, the FAA said. However, the low violation rate indicates that the safety concerns addressed by the regulation will be met with random testing of 10 percent, the FAA believes. If the violation rate increases, the FAA will increase the minimum random testing level.

# # #

An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

1/4/98

TALKING POINTS ON NBC MOVIE "BLACKOUT EFFECT"

READ ONLY IF ASKED

- The made-for-TV movie "Blackout Effect" is a fictional dramatization of an event that has never happened -- a midair collision caused by an equipment failure in the air traffic control system. The fact that such a tragedy has never occurred is due in large part to the vigilance and professionalism of the 34,000 members of FAA's Air Traffic Services who operate and maintain the world's largest and safest system.

- The FAA has aggressively worked with pilots, controllers, and the aviation community to reduce the risk of near midair collisions. In the early 90's, the FAA required airlines to install the traffic alert and collision avoidance system (TCAS) on board air carriers. TCAS gives pilots advance warning and guidance to reduce the risk of near midair collisions. As a result of this and other agency initiatives, reported near midair collision incidents have declined by 40 percent from the early 1990's.

- The FAA does not compromise safety. Procedures are in place to ensure safety; the system will be slowed down with increased spacing, ground holds, and other procedural changes whenever necessary to provide additional safety margins.

- Modernization of the air traffic system is a key priority of FAA Administrator Garvey, and the agency is working to update the system to enhance safety even further and to handle expected traffic growth. The FAA is moving forward in commissioning new systems and increasing the reliability of ATC equipment.

- The air traffic control system has 37,000 separate pieces of equipment that run 24 hours a day, year in and year out. In the past three years, as many as 1,800 new major systems have been commissioned. The FAA works hard to maintain the 99.34 percent availability of equipment throughout the country. Only 3.8 percent of delays are equipment-related. Weather is the largest cause of delays. On a typical day, 1.7 million passengers on 33,000 flights move safely to their destinations.

- While most operational errors -- when separation is lost between aircraft -- do not represent an unsafe situation, the FAA painstakingly investigates each on an individual basis taking whatever steps necessary to correct the error. The operational error rate per 100,000 operations has dropped since 1986 from .92 to .51 (rate at the end of November 1997).

- The National Transportation Safety Board validated the safety of the en route ATC system in a special investigation report to Congress dated January 1996 on air traffic control equipment outages.

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If asked, what is our comment on the Baiada/Boyd letter to Congress?

- The United States operates the most complex and safest airspace system in the world. The FAA does not compromise safety. We know the system is not perfect, and we will continue to evaluate and improve our technology. As always, the FAA welcomes specific proposals on how to improve public safety. Unfortunately, the Baiada/Boyd letter offers no proof that the ATC system can be improved in a shorter time for less money than the FAA proposes, nor does it present any specifics as to how that would be accomplished.

12-31-97

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 02-98
Monday, January 5, 1998
Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202/267-8521

FAA to Consolidate Air Traffic Management in the Washington, D.C. Area

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will combine four air traffic facilities in the Washington, D.C. area into a single new control center -- a move that has the potential to produce significant efficiency and safety benefits for users of the major airports serving the nation's capital.

The new Potomac TRACON (Terminal Radar Approach Control facility) will consolidate the airspace responsibilities, management functions, automation and controller work forces of existing TRACONs at Dulles International Airport, Washington National Airport, Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI) and Andrews Air Force Base. These facilities currently manage the airspace within about 50 miles of their respective airports.

"A single control center for the Washington metropolitan area will let our controllers handle arriving and departing traffic much more efficiently," said FAA Administrator Jane F. Garvey. "Having this 'seamless' airspace will help us meet the ever-growing demand for air traffic services while maintaining today's high safety standards."

The FAA has been evaluating the idea of a consolidated Washington area TRACON since the late 1980s, when the agency became concerned that increasing air traffic would produce unacceptable delays and congestion for the region's four major airports. A series of studies from 1994 to 1997 found that the most cost-beneficial option was combining the Dulles, National, BWI and Andrews TRACONs into a single facility.

The complexity of the airspace in the Washington metropolitan was an important consideration in the FAA's decision to build the new Potomac TRACON. The area is very busy and is constrained by restrictions already in place, such as the overlying East Coast air traffic route system and the adjacent military special use airspace areas.

-more-

New air traffic automation systems in each current TRACON would help the situation as it stands today, but the FAA believes that improvements in controllers' ability to manage air traffic effectively -- and the resulting safety benefits -- warrant a total redesign of Washington area airspace under the control of a single regional facility.

The FAA now will evaluate sites in the region that would best serve the needs of airspace users while addressing the potential relocation of agency employees. The availability of funding for the Potomac TRACON also will be a prime factor in deciding the timetable for constructing this facility.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 3-98
Wednesday, January 8, 1998
Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202/267-8521

FAA Orders Inspection of Boeing 737 Horizontal Stabilizers

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today issued an Airworthiness Directive (AD) requiring operators of certain Boeing 737 aircraft to check the horizontal stabilizers to make sure that all fasteners and elevator attachment fitting bolts in those structures are properly in place. This order affects 211 Boeing 737-300, -400 and -500 series aircraft delivered after September 20, 1995.

The AD requires a one-time detailed visual inspection of the horizontal stabilizers on these aircraft. Within 24 hours or five flights, operators must examine each leading edge for missing fasteners, remove control surface hinge covers and verify that all hinge fitting bolts are properly installed. Operators must report the results of the inspections to the FAA within five days of completion. The FAA estimates that each inspection will take one hour and cost approximately $60 per aircraft.

Over the past 24 hours, FAA inspectors have examined all 737 horizontal stabilizers under production or ready for delivery in the United States. No similar problems were found. The FAA has received a report that an operator found one loose fastener during an inspection of an in-service airplane.

The AD is a precautionary measure prompted by preliminary data from a Boeing 737-300 accident in Indonesia on December 19, 1997. The team investigating the accident informed the FAA that 26 fasteners on the horizontal stabilizer and one bolt from an elevator attachment fitting may have been missing from the right stabilizer before impact.

"Safety is our top priority, and when the investigation identified this potential safety issue, it was the FAA's responsibility to act immediately," said FAA Administrator Jane F. Garvey. "The accident investigation is being run by very experienced and professional Indonesian investigators. They asked the NTSB for support, and we are assisting that effort."

A horizontal stabilizer is the wing-like structure on both sides of an aircraft's tail.

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FAA Statement on SilkAir 737

The FAA is working closely with the National Transportation Safety Board and Indonesian authorities at the site of the Silk Air accident. At any point in an investigation the FAA has the responsibility to evaluate the situation and take immediate action should any safety issues arise.

Consistent with that, preliminary data from the site of the Silk Air accident is being intensely evaluated by the FAA. The data has not been verified, but should it indicate a safety issue the FAA will take immediate action. In preparation for that possibility, the FAA is taking steps to be ready to direct safety inspections on some Boeing 737s should that become necessary.

AIR-1 D Kuhlman
Date 1/8/98 @ 5:27 PM

ADMINISTRATOR'S AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVE ALERT

SUBJECT: Boeing Model 737-300, -400, and -500 series airplanes; Telegraphic AD T98-02-51; Docket 98-NM-04-AD

BACKGROUND: On December 19, 1997, a Model 737-300 operated by Silkair Airlines was involved in an accident after takeoff from Jakarta Soekarno Hatta Airport in Jakarta, Indonesia. The accident is under investigation by the Indonesian authorities with assistance from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), the manufacturer, the operator, and other aviation organizations.

The cause of the accident has not yet been determined. However, preliminary reports indicate that the horizontal stabilizer may have separated from the airplane prior to impact. On-site investigation has revealed that fasteners were missing from certain leading edge structure on the right-hand (RH) horizontal stabilizer. At least one fastener may have been missing from an elevator attachment fitting in an outboard section of the RH horizontal stabilizer. Subsequently, there has been a report of evidence that the fastener was actually installed. However, the FAA received a report that an operator found one loose fastener during inspection of an in-service airplane.

Because the airplane was placed in service a relatively short time ago (February 14, 1997), it is possible that the fasteners were missing because they had not been installed during manufacture. If such a quality control failure occurred on this airplane, it may also have occurred on others produced at approximately the same time.

UNSAFE CONDITION: Loose or missing fasteners on the horizontal stabilizer could reduce the structural integrity of the horizontal stabilizer.

ACTION: This telegraphic AD requires a one-time inspection to detect any missing fasteners on the top and bottom leading edge skin where it attaches to the front spar of the horizontal stabilizer. This telegraphic AD also requires a one-time inspection to detect any loose or missing fasteners of the attachment of the elevator hinge plates to the horizontal stabilizer rear spar fittings. If any fastener is loose or missing, or if the torque sealant has broken on any fastener, this telegraphic AD requires installation of a new or serviceable fastener. The compliance time for the inspections is within 5 flight cycles or 24 clock hours. The telegraphic AD also requires that operators report all inspection findings to the FAA within 5 days.

Because the investigation is continuing, further action may be necessary. Therefore, this is considered to be interim action; the FAA may consider additional rulemaking.

IMPACT: Worldwide fleet: 211; U.S.-registered fleet: 95
95 airplanes x (10 work hours @ $60/WH) = $57,000

AFFECTED U.S. AIRLINES: Alaska (7 airplanes); Boullioun Aviation Services (4); Continental (20); GE Capital Corp. (1); ILFC (5); Pro Air (2); Southwest (51); Western Pacific (5)

NEWS VALUE/MEDIA INTEREST: Wide press interest.

THIS TELEGRAPHIC AD IS EXPECTED TO BE ISSUED TODAY, JANUARY 8, 1998.

cc: S-1, A-1, ADA-1, AOA-2, ADA-30, AVR-1, APA-1 (2), AGC-1, AGC-210, AFS-300, ANM-1

After normal duty hours contact the FAA Duty Officer, Northwest Mountain Region, at (425) 227-2000

DOT/FAA
NORTHWEST MOUNTAIN REGION PRIORITY
RENTON, WASHINGTON

DARRELL M. PEDERSON (425) 227-2100

FAA HEADQUARTERS
ADA-40
WASHINGTON, DC.

EMERGENCY DISTRIBUTION BY TELEGRAM IS REQUIRED.

TRANSMITTED AS FOLLOWS IS TELEGRAPHIC AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVE T98-02-51 FOR IMMEDIATE TRANSMITTAL TO ALL OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF BOEING MODEL 737-300, -400, AND -500 SERIES AIRPLANES.

ON DECEMBER 19, 1997, A BOEING MODEL 737-300 SERIES AIRPLANE OPERATED BY SILKAIR AIRLINES WAS INVOLVED IN AN ACCIDENT AFTER TAKEOFF FROM JAKARTA SOEKARNO HATTA AIRPORT IN JAKARTA, INDONESIA. THE ACCIDENT IS UNDER INVESTIGATION BY THE INDONESIAN AUTHORITIES WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD (NTSB) OF THE UNITED STATES, THE MANUFACTURER, THE OPERATOR, AND OTHER AVIATION ORGANIZATIONS.

ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO DETERMINATION OF THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT, PRELIMINARY REPORTS FROM THE ON-SITE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION INDICATE THAT THE HORIZONTAL STABILIZER MAY HAVE SEPARATED FROM THE AIRPLANE PRIOR TO IMPACT IN THE MUSI RIVER. ON-SITE INVESTIGATION HAS REVEALED THAT APPROXIMATELY 26 FASTENERS WERE MISSING FROM CERTAIN LEADING EDGE STRUCTURE ON THE RIGHT-HAND (RH) HORIZONTAL STABILIZER (12 FROM THE UPPER SURFACE, AND 14 FROM THE LOWER SURFACE). ADDITIONALLY, EARLY REPORTS INDICATED THAT AT LEAST ONE FASTENER MAY HAVE BEEN MISSING FROM AN ELEVATOR ATTACHMENT FITTING IN AN OUTBOARD SECTION OF THE RH HORIZONTAL STABILIZER. SUBSEQUENTLY, THERE HAS BEEN A REPORT OF EVIDENCE THAT THE FASTENER WAS ACTUALLY INSTALLED. HOWEVER, THE FAA HAS RECEIVED A REPORT THAT AN OPERATOR FOUND ONE LOOSE FASTENER DURING INSPECTION OF AN IN-SERVICE AIRPLANE. (THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS TO DATE OF ANY FASTENERS MISSING FROM THE LEFT-HAND (LH) HORIZONTAL STABILIZER.)

THERE IS, AS OF YET, NO EVIDENCE LINKING THESE MISSING OR LOOSE FASTENERS TO THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT.

LOOSE OR MISSING FASTENERS ON THE LH OR RH HORIZONTAL STABILIZER COULD REDUCE THE STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF THE HORIZONTAL STABILIZER.

BECAUSE THE AIRPLANE HAD BEEN PLACED IN SERVICE A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME AGO (FEBRUARY 14, 1997), IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE FASTENERS WERE MISSING BECAUSE THEY HAD NOT BEEN INSTALLED DURING MANUFACTURE. IF SUCH A QUALITY CONTROL FAILURE OCCURRED ON THIS AIRPLANE, IT MAY ALSO HAVE OCCURRED ON OTHERS PRODUCED AT APPROXIMATELY THE SAME TIME.

SINCE AN UNSAFE CONDITION HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED THAT IS LIKELY TO EXIST OR DEVELOP ON OTHER AIRPLANES OF THIS SAME TYPE DESIGN, THIS TELEGRAPHIC AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVE IS ISSUED TO REQUIRE A ONE-TIME GENERAL VISUAL INSPECTION TO DETECT ANY MISSING FASTENERS ON THE TOP AND BOTTOM OF THE LEADING EDGE SKIN WHERE IT ATTACHES TO THE FRONT SPAR OF THE HORIZONTAL STABILIZER. THIS TELEGRAPHIC AD ALSO REQUIRES A ONE-TIME DETAILED VISUAL INSPECTION TO DETECT ANY LOOSE OR MISSING FASTENERS OF THE ATTACHMENT OF THE ELEVATOR HINGE PLATES TO THE HORIZONTAL STABILIZER REAR SPAR FITTINGS. IF A LOOSE OR MISSING FASTENER IS DETECTED, THIS TELEGRAPHIC AD REQUIRES INSTALLATION OF A NEW OR SERVICEABLE FASTENER.

THIS AD ALSO REQUIRES THAT OPERATORS SUBMIT A REPORT OF ALL INSPECTION FINDINGS TO THE FAA. SINCE THE CAUSE OF THE MISSING FASTENERS OF THE LH AND RH HORIZONTAL STABILIZER IS CURRENTLY UNKNOWN, THE INTENT OF THE REQUIRED REPORTS IS TO ENABLE THE FAA TO DETERMINE HOW WIDESPREAD SUCH DISCREPANCIES MAY BE IN THE AFFECTED FLEET. BECAUSE THE INVESTIGATION IS CONTINUING, FURTHER ACTION MAY BE NECESSARY. THEREFORE, THIS TELEGRAPHIC AD IS CONSIDERED TO BE INTERIM ACTION; AND THE FAA MAY CONSIDER ADDITIONAL RULEMAKING.

THIS RULE IS ISSUED UNDER 49 U.S.C. SECTION 44701 (FORMERLY SECTION 601 OF THE FEDERAL AVIATION ACT OF 1958) PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY DELEGATED TO ME BY THE ADMINISTRATOR, AND IS EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT OF THIS AD.

T98-02-51 BOEING: DOCKET 98-NM-04-AD.

APPLICABILITY: MODEL 737-300, -400, AND -500 SERIES AIRPLANES HAVING LINE POSITIONS 2765 THROUGH 2977 INCLUSIVE; CERTIFICATED IN ANY CATEGORY.

NOTE 1: THIS AD APPLIES TO EACH AIRPLANE IDENTIFIED IN THE PRECEDING APPLICABILITY PROVISION, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER IT HAS BEEN MODIFIED, ALTERED, OR REPAIRED IN THE AREA SUBJECT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS AD. FOR AIRPLANES THAT HAVE BEEN MODIFIED, ALTERED, OR REPAIRED SO THAT THE

PERFORMANCE OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS AD IS AFFECTED, THE OWNER/OPERATOR MUST REQUEST APPROVAL FOR AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF COMPLIANCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH (E) OF THIS AD. THE REQUEST SHOULD INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECT OF THE MODIFICATION, ALTERATION, OR REPAIR ON THE UNSAFE CONDITION ADDRESSED BY THIS AD; AND, IF THE UNSAFE CONDITION HAS NOT BEEN ELIMINATED, THE REQUEST SHOULD INCLUDE SPECIFIC PROPOSED ACTIONS TO ADDRESS IT.

COMPLIANCE: REQUIRED AS INDICATED, UNLESS ACCOMPLISHED PREVIOUSLY.

TO PREVENT REDUCED STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF THE HORIZONTAL STABILIZER DUE TO LOOSE OR MISSING FASTENERS OF THE LEFT- OR RIGHT-HAND HORIZONTAL STABILIZER, ACCOMPLISH THE FOLLOWING:

(A) WITHIN 5 FLIGHT CYCLES OR 24 CLOCK HOURS AFTER RECEIPT OF THIS TELEGRAPHIC AD, WHICHEVER OCCURS LATER, PERFORM THE FOLLOWING INSPECTIONS OF THE LEFT- AND RIGHT-HAND SIDES OF THE HORIZONTAL STABILIZER:

(1) PERFORM A GENERAL VISUAL INSPECTION TO DETERMINE IF ANY FASTENERS ARE MISSING ON THE TOP, AND BOTTOM OF THE LEADING EDGE SKIN WHERE IT IS ATTACHED TO THE FRONT SPAR.

(2) PERFORM A DETAILED VISUAL INSPECTION TO DETECT LOOSE OR MISSING FASTENERS OF THE ATTACHMENT OF THE ELEVATOR HINGE PLATES TO THE LEFT- AND RIGHT-HAND SIDES OF THE HORIZONTAL STABILIZER REAR SPAR FITTINGS. ENSURE TORQUE SEALANT HAS NOT BEEN BROKEN ON THE FASTENERS.

(B) IF NO DISCREPANCIES ARE FOUND, NO FURTHER INSPECTIONS ARE REQUIRED BY THIS TELEGRAPHIC AD.

(C) IF ANY FASTENER IS LOOSE OR MISSING, OR IF THE TORQUE SEALANT HAS BEEN BROKEN ON ANY FASTENER, PRIOR TO FURTHER FLIGHT, INSTALL A NEW OR SERVICEABLE FASTENER.

(D) WITHIN 5 DAYS AFTER ACCOMPLISHING THE INSPECTIONS REQUIRED BY THIS AD, REPORT INSPECTION RESULTS, POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, TO THE MANAGER, SEATTLE AIRCRAFT CERTIFICATION OFFICE (ACO), FAA, TRANSPORT AIRPLANE DIRECTORATE, 1601 LIND AVENUE, SW., RENTON, WASHINGTON 98055-4056; FAX (425) 227-1181. INFORMATION COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS CONTAINED IN THIS REGULATION HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB) UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1980 (44 U.S.C. 3501 ET SEQ.) AND HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED OMB CONTROL NUMBER 2120-0056.

(E) AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF COMPLIANCE OR ADJUSTMENT OF THE COMPLIANCE TIME THAT PROVIDES

AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF SAFETY MAY BE USED IF APPROVED BY THE MANAGER, SEATTLE ACO. OPERATORS SHALL SUBMIT THEIR REQUESTS THROUGH AN APPROPRIATE FAA PRINCIPAL MAINTENANCE INSPECTOR, WHO MAY ADD COMMENTS AND THEN SEND IT TO THE MANAGER, SEATTLE ACO.

NOTE 2: INFORMATION CONCERNING THE EXISTENCE OF APPROVED ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF COMPLIANCE WITH THIS AD, IF ANY, MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE MANAGER, SEATTLE ACO.

(F) SPECIAL FLIGHT PERMITS MAY BE ISSUED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 21.197 AND 21.199 OF THE FEDERAL AVIATION REGULATIONS (14 CFR 21.197 AND 21.199) TO OPERATE THE AIRPLANE TO A LOCATION WHERE THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS AD CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED.

(G) TELEGRAPHIC AD T98-02-51, ISSUED ON JANUARY 8, 1998, BECOMES EFFECTIVE UPON RECEIPT.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: GREGORY L. SCHNEIDER, AEROSPACE ENGINEER, AIRFRAME BRANCH, ANM-120S, FAA, TRANSPORT AIRPLANE DIRECTORATE, SEATTLE AIRCRAFT CERTIFICATION OFFICE, 1601 LIND AVENUE, SW., RENTON, WASHINGTON 98055-4056; TELEPHONE (425) 227-2028 OR (425) 227- 2557, FAX (425) 227-1181.

ISSUED IN RENTON, WASHINGTON, ON

JANUARY 8, 1998.

Ronald T. Wojnar

RONALD T. WOJNAR, MANAGER
TRANSPORT AIRPLANE DIRECTORATE
AIRCRAFT CERTIFICATION SERVICE

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 9, 1998

Statement by the
Federal Aviation Administration
on the ValuJet Inspection

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) conducted a National Aviation Safety Inspection Program (NASIP) review on ValuJet between October 20 - November 7, 1997. ValuJet is currently doing business as Air Tran.

This NASIP was part of an inspection of all carriers in operation less than 5 years and was recommended in the Agency's 90-day safety review in 1996. The NASIP team consisted of trained aviation safety inspectors with expertise in operations and maintenance.

As the team goes through the normal process of writing, reviewing and editing there are always several drafts of a report. It is the FAA's regular practice that there are no changes to any of the original findings throughout this report writing process. All the initial findings made by the team will be in the final report. Normal post-inspection work will establish whether the findings are valid safety discrepancies.

In addition to inspectors from the agency's field office in Atlanta and the NASIP team, members of the FAA's Certification, Standardization and Evaluation Team (CSET) and staff from the Office of Inspector General participated in the review of a draft of the report. These additional levels of review were prompted by heightened agency and public interest in ValuJet as a result of the accident on May 11, 1996.

We cannot comment on specific findings at this point in the inspection. Currently, a validation process is underway and any speculation drawn from preliminary and unsubstantiated data could result in inaccurate information being released to the American public.

The final NASIP report on ValuJet is expected to be completed by late January. This will be a public document.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 4-98
Friday, Jan. 9, 1998
Contact: Henry J. Price
Phone: 202-267-8521

FAA Proposes Civil Penalty to Venezuelan Air Carrier Servivensa

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has proposed that the Venezuelan air carrier, Servivensa, pay a civil penalty of $144,000 for conducting flights that violated FAA's aircraft noise regulations.

Under the FAA's aircraft noise program the agency classifies aircraft in three stages. Stage I aircraft are the noisiest, Stage III the quietest. The FAA requires that foreign carriers designate and receive FAA authorization regarding what "stage" aircraft they can operate in the United States. Between Jan. 1 and Jan. 21, 1997, Servivensa conducted 48 flights in U.S. airspace with two Stage II aircraft not authorized by the FAA.

Servivensa, which is owned by the South American company Servicios Avensa, was informed that a civil penalty of $3,000 would be assessed for each flight conducted in violation of FAA's regulations.

The announcement of the civil penalty proposed against Servivensa is being made in accordance with the FAA's policy of releasing information to the public on newly issued enforcement actions in cases that involve penalties of $50,000 or more.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 5-98
Monday, January 12, 1998
Contact: Henry J. Price
Phone: 202-267-8521

FAA Licenses Third Commercial Spaceport

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has issued a space launch site operator's license to the Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority to operate a commercial spaceport at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility (WFF) at Wallops Island, Va.

"The approval of this new spaceport demonstrates the dynamic and growing state of the commercial space industry," said FAA Acting Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation Patricia Grace Smith. "The FAA intends to work with these facilities and the entire industry to make sure the U.S. commercial space industry is the safest in the world."

Virginia joins California and Florida as states with commercially or state operated space launch facilities. The FAA previously issued commercial space launch site operator's licenses for spaceports on leased property at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., and Cape Canaveral Air Station, Fla. The Virginia facility will operate under a similar arrangement with NASA.

Like its two predecessors, the Virginia Space Flight Center will focus on small to medium rockets up to the Athena III and Taurus XL class of vehicles used primarily to launch low earth orbit (LEO) communications satellites. LEO satellites orbit at altitudes between 100 miles and a distance required for geostationary orbits of 22,300 miles. Demand for that type of launch is increasing as a number of firms are competing to establish constellations of LEO satellites providing global mobile communications systems.

- more -

The facility will consist of two launch pads, one currently operational and the other under construction, a payload processing and integration building and a launch operator office building. The Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority is anticipating a first launch in the spring of 1999.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 06-98
Tuesday, January 13, 1998
Contact: Drucella Andersen
Phone: 202-267-3883

Media Advisory - TWA 800 Tape Release

WASHINGTON -- On Wednesday, January 14 at 11 a.m., the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), will release the air traffic control tape of the accident involving TWA Flight 800 near East Moriches, NY. The release will take place in room 9AB at FAA Headquarters, 800 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. The FAA will allow reporters to record the tape and will provide them with a transcript, but will not comment on the accident investigation.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

Author: eliot brenner at APA
Date: 1/14/98 10:19 PM
Priority: Normal
TO: eliot brenner at APA
Subject: TEXT

1-15-98
FAA STATEMENT ON COURIER CARGO SHIPMENTS

The following may be attributed to FAA spokesman Eliot Brenner:

The Federal Aviation Adminstration and the Office of the Inspector General, as previously announced, conducted several tests of cargo shippers and airlines to see if FAA procedures for cargo shipments were being properly followed. We were not fully satisified with the results. Everyone involved has now been notified and are aware of the proper procedures.

Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater, on the advice of FAA Adminsitrator Jane Garvey and Inspector General Kenneth Meade, Thursday is expected to recommend that additional testing be conducted. The FAA will look at current regulations to see if they need to be enhanced.

We take any violation of shipping regulations seriously and will move aggressively when problems are found. Our top priority is safety, and this is an example of a rapid reaction to the discovery of potential problems in the shipping system. This is a clear case of the safety oversight system working as it should.

(Editors: Security considerations prohibit the FAA from commenting on the content of any report on the initial investigations or confirming any specifics reported in any news stories. There will be no further comment from the FAA.)

Additional contact: Jeff Nelligan at the Office of the Inspector General, Department of Transportation.

U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Aviation
Administration

NEWS:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 21, 1998

CONTACT: Kathleen Bergen

FAA AUTHORIZES FULL OPERATIONS FOR AMERIJET

The Federal Aviation Administration today authorized a full return to service for Amerijet Intl., Inc. of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. The authorization follows intensive FAA surveillance of the cargo airline since it voluntarily ceased operating late last year.

On Dec. 24, Amerijet voluntarily ceased operating following an FAA inspection which revealed serious deficiencies in the carrier's cargo handling operation. Under the terms of a consent agreement, FAA required Amerijet to implement new and revise existing cargo handling procedures, ensure that cabin liners and other fire retardant equipment are in compliance with Federal air safety regulations, and demonstrate that flight crews appropriately use manuals during cargo loading and flight operations. Also, FAA reviewed Amerijet's training records and quality control procedures.

Following the intensive surveillance of Amerijet's domestic and Latin American operations, FAA determined that Amerijet has met the terms of the consent order.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 7-98
Wednesday, Jan. 21, 1998
Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202/267-8521

More than 90 Percent of Late-Model Boeing 737 Fleet Inspected

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced today that 91 percent of affected foreign and domestic Boeing 737 horizontal stabilizers have been inspected for missing or loose bolts with no instances of any impact on flight safety.

Within 24 hours of the FAA issuing a directive, 68 aircraft --100 percent of the affected U.S. fleet -- were inspected. The agency is continuing to analyze the inspection data.

"I am pleased that, working with the FAA, airlines were able to take such rapid action to ensure the safety of their aircraft," said FAA Administrator Jane F. Garvey. "This impressive effort demonstrates the FAA and worldwide commitment to aviation safety."

Of the 68 U.S.-registered aircraft, Southwest Airlines reported that one aircraft had a missing leading edge screw and another had a loose elevator hinge bolt. Continental Airlines reported four missing leading edge screws on one aircraft.

Foreign carriers are not required by international law to follow FAA orders, but 124 of 143 foreign aircraft have been inspected and the results reported to the FAA. Overall, 192 of 211 aircraft have been inspected worldwide -- 91 percent of the foreign and domestic fleet.

Foreign carriers have reported five aircraft with loose or missing fasteners. One aircraft had a loose elevator hinge bolt. One aircraft had a missing elevator hinge bolt and nut. One aircraft had a loose elevator hinge bolt and four missing leading edge screws. Two aircraft had four loose elevator hinge bolts each. Twelve aircraft had cracked torque putty, which is put around bolts or screws to detect movement or realignment.

Horizontal stabilizers are the wing-like structures on both sides of an aircraft's tail. Attached by a number of hinges to the horizontal stabilizer are the elevators, which make the aircraft pitch up or down when rotated on the hinge. Elevator hinges on Boeing 737 aircraft are attached by a minimum of 20 bolts per airplane. The leading edge is the rounded front metal skin of the horizontal stabilizer, which is held on by hundreds of screws.

- more -

The FAA issued an Airworthiness Directive to inspect certain Boeing 737 aircraft on Jan. 8, following a report of missing leading edge screws on a Silkair plane that was destroyed in an accident.

On Jan. 12, the FAA sent teams of inspectors to Boeing facilities to examine quality control in the manufacture of 737 aircraft. Their evaluation continues, and if necessary, the FAA will take appropriate action when the data and information collected are properly examined.

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An electronic version of this statement is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 28, 1998

FAA Statement on Preliminary Operational Error Report

According to a preliminary operational error report, at approximately 10:00 a.m. EST, Air Force One and a Delta MD-88 came within 2.88 miles of each other, slightly within the normal 3-mile separation for Washington area airspace. Neither was forced to take evasive action and safety was never compromised.

Approximately 750 confirmed operational errors occur annually.

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 28, 1998, 6:30 p.m., EST
Contact: Eliot B. Brenner
Telephone: 202/267-3883

FAA Statement

Updated Information on Possible Operational Error Report

WASHINGTON -- Additional information concerning a preliminary report of an operational error at 10 a.m. today indicates the separation between Air Force One and a Delta MD-88 may have been up to 3.25 miles, greater than the minimum 3 mile separation standard and the preliminary figure of 2.88 miles reported earlier. The FAA continues to review the matter.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 10-98
Thursday, Jan. 29, 1998
Contact: Henry J. Price
Phone: 202-267-8521

FAA Lauds Business Aircraft Group for Move to Quieter Planes

WASHINGTON -- Working with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) board of directors has passed a resolution that calls for the group's 5,200 members to end the operation of noisier aircraft by 2005. NBAA membership has over 6,800 aircraft, which represents about 75 percent of the business aircraft fleet.

"I salute this impressive environmental effort by the nation's major corporate aircraft operators," said FAA Administrator Jane F. Garvey. "This resolution represents an environmentally responsible initiative by an important segment of our aviation community working with the FAA to address noise problems at our nation's airports."

Current regulations require large commercial aircraft to use Stage II or Stage III aircraft, which are quieter than Stage I aircraft. Unlike commercial aircraft, noisier Stage I corporate aircraft under 75,000 pounds are not currently addressed by any federal phase-out program. The Dec. 12 NBAA resolution specifically calls for "... all NBAA members refrain from adding Stage I aircraft to their fleets beginning in January 2000 and furthermore recommends ending operation of such aircraft by January 2005."

The FAA worked with the NBAA in developing the resolution. In addition, the NBAA has been active in initiating other environmental actions, such as noise abatement procedures for how members operate aircraft in order to reduce community noise exposure.

The NBAA was founded in 1947. The organization's membership includes 85 percent of the Fortune 500 companies that operate aircraft.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 11-98
January 29, 1998
Contact: Eliot B. Brenner
Phone: 202-267-3883

EDITORS NOTE: The following is a corrected version of a release issued earlier.

Operational Error Update

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration's review of a preliminary report of an operational error involving Air Force One in Washington, D.C., is continuing.

Additional analysis today of radar information now indicates that the minimum separation standard of 3.0 nautical miles (3.45 statute miles) horizontally or 1,000 feet vertically in this airspace was fully maintained between Air Force One and a Delta Airlines flight. However, the radar information also now indicates that the separation standard was not maintained 14 seconds earlier between Air Force One and a U.S. Airways flight.

Air Force One was west of National Airport, headed west and climbing. The Delta aircraft was west of National, headed east to land, and U.S. Airways flight 484, a Boeing 737, was southwest of the airport, and headed north for entry into the landing sequence.

Preliminary radar analysis indicates that in turning Air Force One to the southwest to provide separation from the Delta aircraft at approximately 9:16 a.m. EST, the proper separation standard was not maintained with the U.S. Airways aircraft which had been directed by approach controllers to begin a circling maneuver to the west and south to prepare for approaching National Airport from the north along the Potomac River. The U.S. Airways flight was at 8,500 feet and descending. Air Force One was at 7,500 feet and climbing, but descended to 7,000 feet at the departure controller's direction. The two aircraft were separated at their closest point by 900 feet vertically and 2.36 nautical miles horizontally.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at: www.faa.gov