FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 28-00
Monday, May 1, 2000
Contact: Tammy Jones
Phone: 202-267-8521

FAA Launches First Oceanic Data Link Services Over Atlantic

WASHINGTON – In a move that increases the safety and efficiency of oceanic air travel, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has initiated use of electronic air/ground communication services for aircraft operating over the Atlantic Ocean. The same system has been operating for aircraft flying over Pacific Ocean airspace for more than a year.

The FAA's New York Air Traffic Control Center began initial operations in March of the Multi-Sector Oceanic Data Link System, which provides a means for air traffic controllers to have two-way electronic communications with aircraft equipped with data link. This technology is designed to eliminate the need for voice communication between data link-equipped aircraft and air traffic controllers, improving the reliability and timeliness of message delivery.

In conjunction with aircraft equipped with the Future Air Navigation System (FANS -- an international standard for avionics that are compliant with Oceanic Data Link), the Oceanic Data Link system provides a means to automatically check pending clearances for conflicts, while allowing the flight crews to automatically load flight clearances they have received into the aircraft's Flight Management System. The Oceanic Data Link system also provides the controllers with an integrated interface to the flight data processor and addresses the existing high frequency communications problems with aircraft, such as frequency congestion, transcription errors, and lack of timeliness.

Oceanic controllers began using the system in limited operations at a single sector in March 2000. As controllers become more familiar with Oceanic Data Link, operations will expand to include full system capabilities. Full operations are planned at all Caribbean sectors later this year. Once full operations in the Caribbean are in effect, operation of the system will transition to New York's North Atlantic sectors.

Other North Atlantic air traffic service providers are planning the initiation of FANS-based data link trials later this year. New York's early lead in those efforts will be important in the realization of the goal of a seamless data link operation in Atlantic airspace.

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

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 29-00
Tuesday, May 2, 2000
Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202/267-8521

FAA Names Steven Wallace Director of Accident Investigation

WASHINGTON – The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has named 24-year FAA veteran Steven B. Wallace as director of the agency's Office of Accident Investigation effective next month.

In his new position, Wallace will oversee all FAA aircraft accident investigations and all activities related to the National Transportation Safety Board. The Office of Accident Investigation examines aviation accidents and incidents to detect unsafe conditions and trends and to coordinate any necessary corrective actions.

From 1991 until assuming his new responsibilities, Wallace was the FAA's senior representative at the U.S. embassy in Rome. He served as the principal FAA contact for civil aviation authorities, U.S. diplomatic missions and the aviation industry in a 29-country geographic area spanning Central Europe, the Mediterranean and parts of the Middle East.

During the period 1984-91, Wallace was manager of the standards staff in the FAA's Transport Airplane Directorate in Seattle. He headed a staff of engineers, paratechnical specialists and writers who were responsible for developing regulatory requirements and guidance for certification of transport aircraft, and for certification of foreign-manufactured transports for the U.S. market.

Wallace began his FAA career in 1976 as an attorney in the agency's Eastern Region counsel's office in New York. In 1979 he moved to the Northwest Mountain counsel's office in Seattle, where the emphasis of his legal work shifted from aviation enforcement to issues related to certification and manufacturing of transport aircraft.

Wallace holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology from Springfield College, Springfield, Mass., and a Juris Doctor Degree from St. John's University School of Law, New York. He is admitted to legal practice before the New York Bar and federal courts.

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Wallace has been a licensed pilot since 1977. He currently holds a commercial pilot's license with multiengine and instrument ratings. He is married with two children.

Wallace comes from an aviation family. His father flew as a Pan American Airways captain on the full line of Douglas aircraft from the DC-3 through the DC-8, and on the Boeing Stratocruiser. His mother was Pan American's first female celestial navigation instructor, a position she earned in 1942.

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

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 30-00
Thursday, May 11, 2000
Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202/267-8521

FAA Taps John Thornton to Head Free Flight Phase 2

WASHINGTON – Speaking at the Global Air & Space 2000 conference in Crystal City, Va., Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Jane F. Garvey today announced that she has named John F. Thornton to direct Free Flight Phase 2, which will build on the successes of the Free Flight Phase 1 program and introduce new capabilities from 2003 through 2005.

In his new position, Thornton will oversee geographic expansion of the Phase 1 elements -- Traffic Management Advisor, passive Final Approach Spacing Tool, User Request Evaluation Tool, Surface Movement Advisor and Collaborative Decision Making. Both phases of the program feature computer hardware and software modernization tools designed to provide early measurable benefits to controllers and airlines.

Thornton also will direct development and deployment of several new Free Flight capabilities. Collaborative Routing Coordination Tool is a set of automation capabilities that evaluate the impact of traffic flow management rerouting strategies. High Altitude Airspace Concepts will add sectors above 35,000 feet to FAA air route traffic control centers that do not now have them. Phase 2 also will assume responsibility for the FAA-industry efforts to implement Controller-Pilot Data Link Communications (CPDLC) technology. Thornton will report to Charles Keegan, director of the Free Flight program office.

Prior to his appointment, Thornton had been communications manager in the Free Flight Phase 1 program since its inception in July 1998. From 1997 until that time, he served in various positions with the FAA's Air Traffic Requirements Service.

From 1995 to 1997, Thornton was the senior legislative representative for the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA), the political advocate for the nation's national park system. His responsibilities at NPCA included federal budget and appropriations processes, the Clean Air Act, and national parks in the southeastern and southwestern United States.

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During the period 1983-95, Thornton played a key role in reorganizing the FAA' s new controller workforce after President Reagan fired striking air traffic controllers. He was instrumental in the establishment of the new National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), where he served for more than 10 years in various executive positions -- as national coordinator, executive director and senior director of legislative affairs. Thornton also served as an AFL-CIO special envoy to Russia in1992.

In 1973, Mr. Thornton joined the FAA as an air traffic control specialist at Washington National Airport, where he qualified as a control tower operator and as a radar controller in the Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) facility. He began his career as a U. S. Air Force air traffic controller in 1965. He qualified as a control tower operator and as a radar controller at various air bases during his 8-year military commitment.

Thornton received a bachelor of science degree in political science from LaSalle University in Philadelphia.

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

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 31-00
Monday, May 15, 2000
Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202-267-8521

Media Advisory: TIME CHANGE -- EgyptAir 990 Tape Release

(Note time change from 1:00 p.m. to **11:00 a.m.**)

WASHINGTON – On Tuesday, May 16, at 11:00 a.m. EDT, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will release the air traffic control tape and transcript associated with the accident involving EgyptAir 990, a Boeing 767 that crashed into the Atlantic Ocean off Nantucket Island, Mass., on October 31, 1999. The FAA will release the tape without comment, since the National Transportation Safety Board is still investigating the accident.

The audio tape will be played in Conference Room 9A-B on the ninth floor of FAA Headquarters, 800 Independence Ave., S.W. Running time of the tape is approximately one hour, 20 minutes.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 32-00
Friday, May 19, 2000
Contact: Alison Duquette
Phone: 202-267-8521

FAA Issues Emergency Order on Boeing 767 Underwing Bolts

WASHINGTON- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) yesterday ordered operators of Boeing 767 airplanes to inspect bolts used in the underwing fittings that attach the strut and engine to the wing. The inspections must be performed within five or 10 days, depending on the airplane's production date.

The emergency Airworthiness Directive (AD) is based on one report of one cracked and two fractured bolts on a Boeing 767-200 airplane. The damage is attributed to stress corrosion in the bolt material, H-11 steel.

The AD requires operators to perform a one-time inspection to determine whether H-11 steel bolts have been installed in the underwing fittings of both struts. If H-11 bolts are installed, or if the bolt type cannot be determined, operators must perform repetitive ultrasonic inspections every 300 flight cycles or 500 flight hours, whichever occurs later. If the inspections detect any cracking or fracturing, the operator must replace both bolts with new, improved bolts. An operator may forego the inspections if the bolts are replaced.

The AD affects 230 aircraft worldwide, 120 of which are registered in the United States. Operators include Airborne Express, American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Trans World Airlines, United Airlines, USAirways, and United Parcel Service. The operators have already begun inspections based on the information provided by the manufacturer and the FAA.

The total cost to U.S. operators for the one-time inspection is estimated at $36,000, $300 per airplane. Operators are required to report their findings to the FAA. The agency may take additional action if necessary.

The AD will be posted on the FAA's web site at: http://av-info.faa.gov/ad/ad.htm.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 33-00
Friday, May 19, 2000
Contact: Rebecca Trexler
Phone: 202-267-8521

FAA Awards Grants for the Development of Low-Cost Explosives Detection Systems

WASHINGTON—The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced today that it has awarded three companies grants totaling about $8.6 million to develop explosives detectors that will cost much less than current devices, but have the same high detection and low false-alarm rates. These systems will be used to scan checked baggage at smaller air carrier stations that don't need the high baggage-processing rate of current systems.

"Safety is President Clinton's and Vice President Gore's highest transportation priority," U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater said. "These new systems will protect the traveling public by providing state-of-the-art, cost-effective explosives detection systems."

"Our current certified systems are built to handle peak passenger loads at busy airports and they cost about $1 million apiece," said Cathal L. Flynn, FAA's associate administrator for civil aviation security. "To save taxpayers' money and reduce the ultimate cost to passengers, we're looking for systems that don't necessarily handle as many bags per hour and cost only around $300,000. If industry can meet this demand, we'll be able to provide sophisticated security equipment to smaller air carrier stations across the nation."

The grants announced today will provide $7.5 million to InVision Technologies Inc. of Newark, Calif.; $757,432 to L-3 Communications of New York City; and $313,309 to PerkinElmer Inc. of Wellesley, Mass.; for the delivery of prototypes within 15 months. The grant project is designed to expedite the development of low-cost certified explosives detection systems. There are at least 100 smaller air carrier stations where the new systems would be appropriate. By deploying the new cheaper systems at these sites, the government expects to save a minimum of $60 million in initial costs, in addition to substantially reducing air carriers' costs for maintenance.

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The FAA has already deployed 93 of the larger, faster certified explosives detection systems and plans to deploy 24 more by Sept. 30, 2000. L-3 Communications and InVision Technologies Inc. are presently the only two vendors producing systems that meet FAA certification standards.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 34-00
Monday, May 22, 2000
Contact: Marcia Adams
Phone: 202-267-8521

MEDIA ADVISORY
Commercial Space Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting

WASHINGTON - The Commercial Space Transportation Advisory Committee (COMSTAC) will meet Wednesday, May 31, 2000, in the Bessie Coleman Conference Center at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Headquarters building, 800 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. COMSTAC, an industry-led group, advises the FAA and Department of Transportation on commercial space transportation issues.

Steven H. Flajser, COMSTAC chair and vice president, space systems, at Loral Space and Communications, Ltd., will present opening remarks at 8:30 a.m. FAA associate administrator for commercial space transportation (AST) Patricia Grace Smith, whose office has federal oversight of the nation's commercial space industry, will report on AST activities since the fall COMSTAC meeting.

Other presenters at the meeting are:

- Eric Sterner, staff director, House Science Committee Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics and Floyd DesChamps of the Senate Commerce Committee Subcommittee on Science Technology and Space, will present an update on legislative issues on Capitol Hill of interest to the commercial space industry;
- Edward "Pete" Aldridge Jr., will report on the Defense Science Board Task Force study;
- Tom Rogers, chief engineer, Space Transportation Association, will provide an historical overview of commercial space transportation; and
- Daniel Dumbacher, NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, will report on NASA's space transportation initiative.

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There also will be reports on the COMSTAC working groups – Technology and Innovation, Resusable Launch Vehicles, Risk Management and Launch Operations.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 35-00
Monday, May 22, 2000
Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202-267-8521

Media Advisory: Alaska 261 Tape Release

WASHINGTON – On Wednesday, May 24, at 10:00 a.m. EDT, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will release the air traffic control tapes and transcripts associated with the accident involving Alaska 261, a Boeing MD-83 that crashed into the Pacific Ocean off Point Mugu, Calif., on January 31, 2000. The FAA will release the tape without comment, since the National Transportation Safety Board is still investigating the accident.

The audiotape will be played in Conference Room 9A-B on the ninth floor of FAA Headquarters, 800 Independence Ave., S.W. Running time of the tapes is approximately two hours, 40 minutes. Only credentialed media representatives will be admitted to this event.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 35-00
Monday, May 22, 2000
Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202-267-8521

Media Advisory: Alaska 261 Tape Release

WASHINGTON – On Wednesday, May 24, at 10:00 a.m. EDT, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will release the air traffic control tapes and transcripts associated with the accident involving Alaska 261, a Boeing MD-83 that crashed into the Pacific Ocean off Point Mugu, Calif., on January 31, 2000. The FAA will release the tape without comment, since the National Transportation Safety Board is still investigating the accident.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 36-00
May 24, 2000
Contact: William Shumann
Phone: 202-267-8521

Statement on Land and Hold Short Operations

WASHINGTON- The Federal Aviation Administration will delay implementing changes to an air traffic control procedure that has been safely in use for over 30 years. While we continue to work with aviation operators and pilot groups on how to expand the use of Land and Hold Short Operations (LAHSO), the current LAHSO procedures will remain in effect.

LAHSO is a procedure that has been used safely since 1968. Use of the procedure increases airport capacity at busy airports by allowing aircraft to land and stop on long runways before an intersection with another runway. Stopping short allows the air traffic controller to have another aircraft take off or land on the intersecting runway. LAHSO has been refined through years of operational experience and cooperation among the FAA, airlines, pilots and controllers.

The FAA, with the airlines, airline pilots and others, will conduct flight simulator modeling of aircraft performance, under specific runway configurations and weather, to ensure the very high level of safety is maintained as we move forward with expanding the LAHSO procedure.

There is no change in the long-standing rule that pilots always may accept or refuse a clearance to land and hold short.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 37-00
Thursday, May 25, 2000
Contact: Les Dorr, Jr.
Phone: 202-267-8521

FAA Finalizes Insulation Replacement Rules

WASHINGTON — The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today issued final rules ordering operators of 719 Boeing MD-80, MD-88, MD-90, DC-10 and MD-11 aircraft to replace insulation blankets covered with metalized Mylar. The agency proposed the rules last August to minimize the risk of fire spreading aboard these types of aircraft.

Today's Airworthiness Directives require operators to determine whether their planes have metalized Mylar-covered insulation materials and where, then replace them with new insulation blankets within five years. Replacement materials must meet the FAA's new flame propagation standard, which is based on an American Society for Testing and Materials flammability standard.

"The risk of fire aboard these aircraft is very low, but this is a prudent action to take to raise the bar on safety," said FAA Administrator Jane F. Garvey.

The FAA is going beyond the current acceptable level of safety and is proposing an even higher standard for testing insulation on all new aircraft. The new test standard was developed by the FAA with input from world-renowned fire experts. The agency plans to issue a proposal for all new aircraft soon. While other insulation materials in the current U.S. fleet are safe, tests show that metalized Mylar falls far below the new test standard.

The FAA continues to work closely with the international aviation community through the International Aircraft Materials Fire Test Working Group on the new test standard for aircraft insulation. In addition, the FAA and Boeing are studying procedures for flight crews to follow in the rare event of smoke in the airplane to make sure the procedures are correct and properly prioritized.

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Today order affects 719 U.S.-registered aircraft; the worldwide fleet numbers approximately 1,500. U.S. operators include: Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, Boeing, Continental Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Federal Express, Frontier Airlines, Midwest Express, Northwest Airlines, Spirit Airlines, Trans World Airlines, US Airways and World Airways.

The estimated cost to U.S. operators to replace insulation in all these models of aircraft is approximately $368.4 million.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 38-00
Wednesday, May 31, 2000
Contact: Tammy Jones
Phone: 202-267-3462

New Equipment Helps FAA Reduce Weather Delays

WASHINGTON – The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today announced operational use of a new tool designed to help reduce delays at major airports in the northeastern part of the U.S.

Installation of the Departure Spacing Program (DSP) is one of the first milestones in the Spring 2000 Initiative, announced in March by President Clinton and U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater. The aim of the initiative, part of the President's "people first" agenda, is to provide better service to airline customers by encouraging the FAA and the airline industry to keep passengers moving despite severe weather.

"DSP will help the airlines provide better service for passengers while at the same time maintain the highest standards of safety," said Administrator Jane F. Garvey." This is one of the decision support tools we feel will greatly enhance information sharing and system performance."

DSP is a coordination and planning tool that uses pertinent air traffic information from airports equipped with the system, along with other information from filed flight plans, to coordinate departures by spacing aircraft more evenly. This allows the best use of existing capacity, expediting the flow of air traffic while minimizing delays. The tool has been in use at LaGuardia, Kennedy, Newark and Philadelphia airport towers and in radar control facilities in the New York area since April 2000.

The DSP enables air traffic controllers to work more efficiently with traffic management coordinators to better use existing capacity for departing aircraft. Using DSP controllers can coordinate rerouting to avoid severe weather and reduce the need for voice communication between air traffic control facilities by providing flight plan information and reports.

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In the future, this system will be expanded to allow the FAA Air Traffic Control System Command Center in Herndon, Va. to facilitate the flow of traffic into and out of all of the northeast U.S. airports to maximize use of available airspace. A future enhancement of DSP will include historical trend analysis.

Computer Sciences Corporation developed the system.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 39-00
Thursday, June 1, 2000
Contact: Alison Duquette
Phone: 202-267-3462

FAA Refines International Safety Program

WASHINGTON - The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today announced that it's changing the categories used in its International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) program to rate a foreign civil aviation authority's ability to meet international aviation safety standards. As of May 25, the agency moved from a three- to a two-category rating system.

Since September 1994, the FAA has provided the public with safety information about countries with air carriers that operate to the United States. Foreign civil aviation authorities, **not** individual airlines, are assessed for adherence to International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards. ICAO, the United Nations' technical agency for aviation, establishes international standards and recommended practices for aircraft operations and maintenance.

"By working in cooperation with the international aviation community, the IASA program is producing real improvements to aviation safety," said FAA Administrator Jane F. Garvey. "Since the program began in 1992, 16 countries have moved from a conditional or unacceptable rating to Category 1."

Until now, the FAA has used three categories to rate a country: (1) acceptable (2) conditional and (3) unacceptable.

Countries in Categories 2 and 3 did not meet international standards. Category 2 was distinguished from Category 3 by the fact that, at the time of the assessment, an air carrier from the Category 2 country was providing air service to the United States. Countries in the former Category 1 will remain Category 1. Countries in the former Categories 2 and 3 will be laced in the new Category 2. The FAA is changing the categories to eliminate any confusion from having two different categories that address non-compliance with ICAO standards.

- more -

IASA ratings will now be as follows:

- **Category 1, Does Comply with ICAO Standards:** A civil aviation authority has been assessed by FAA inspectors and has been found to license and oversee air carriers in accordance with ICAO aviation safety standards.

- **Category 2, Does Not Comply with ICAO Standards:** FAA inspectors assess a civil aviation authority and find areas that do not meet ICAO standards. This rating applies if the country: lacks laws or regulations in accordance with ICAO standards; lacks the technical expertise or resources to license or oversee air carriers; does not have adequately trained and qualified technical personnel; does not provide adequate inspector guidance for enforcement and compliance with ICAO standards; or has insufficient documentation and records and inadequate ongoing oversight of air carriers.

Countries in Category 2 with existing operations to the United States will only be permitted to continue operations at current levels under heightened FAA surveillance. New services may only be added if aircraft are wet-leased from a U.S. carrier or a carrier authorized by a Category 1 country. Carriers that do not have air carrier service to the United States will not be permitted to commence service while in Category 2, except by using wet-leased aircraft.

There are 105 countries participating in the IASA program. To date, 95 assessments have been completed; 10 are pending. The FAA will conduct biennial reassessments for those countries with air carrier service to the United States.

The FAA has assisted civil aviation authorities with less than acceptable ratings by providing technical expertise, assistance with inspections, and training courses. Working with ICAO, the FAA hopes to continue to assist countries that have Category 2 ratings.

The FAA's policy statement on changes to the IASA program was published in the May 25th ***Federal Register.*** Comments may be provided to the FAA.

Travelers may call 1-800-FAA-SURE (1-800-322-7873) to obtain a summary statement about the foreign civil aviation authority assessment results. Visit the FAA's IASA web site at www.faa.gov/avr/iasa/index.htm.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 40-00
Friday, June 2, 2000
Contact: Alison Duquette
Paul Takemoto
Phone: 202-267-3462

Media Advisory

WASHINGTON- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will hold a media briefing today at noon to discuss the results of a recent national safety inspection of Alaska Airlines.

The off-camera, on-the-record briefing will be held at FAA Headquarters (800 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 9AB) and will be conducted by Nick Lacey, director, Flight Standards Service. His remarks will be limited to the inspection findings and proposed FAA actions. He will not comment on the ongoing National Transportation Safety Board investigation of the Alaska Airlines Flight 261 accident.

Accredited media only are invited to attend. Reporters outside the Washington, D.C. area may listen to the briefing and ask questions via telephone. Interested out-of-town reporters should call Alison Duquette or Paul Takemoto for the telephone number.

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An electronic version of this media advisory is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 41-00
Friday, June 2, 2000
Contact: Paul Takemoto
Alison Duquette
Phone: 202-267-3462

FAA Proposes to Suspend Alaska Airlines' Heavy Maintenance Authority

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today proposed to suspend Alaska Airlines' authority to conduct heavy maintenance. This action stems from a national safety inspection conducted by the FAA that found that the airline's overall system for monitoring maintenance procedures failed to meet federal standards.

The inspection was prompted by the Jan. 31 accident of Alaska Airlines Flight 261, which is currently under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board. It focused on the airline's maintenance and operations systems at Seattle and Oakland. The inspection found that while Alaska was for the most part in compliance with the regulations, there were serious breakdowns in record keeping, documentation, and quality assurance. It also found that maintenance personnel are not following FAA-approved procedures contained in the airline's manuals.

Alaska Airlines has seven days to file additional information with the FAA. The FAA will then review that information and propose action that the airline will have 30 days to comply with. During that period, FAA review will be required for any aircraft returned to service following heavy maintenance. Any suspension of authority will remain in place until the airline can show full compliance with federal regulations. Approximately six to seven percent of the airline's fleet of 89 aircraft is in heavy maintenance in any given month. Under due process, the airline has 30 days to appeal.

Heavy maintenance involves major repairs made when an aircraft it taken out of service, as distinct from routine maintenance between.

- more -

Some of the more significant findings include:

- Procedures pertaining to releasing aircraft into service after maintenance did not ensure that all maintenance had been completed and documented before release.
- Procedures for conducting in-depth inspections of the aircraft were not adequately defined in company procedure manuals.
- Audits conducted by Alaska were found to be ineffective in that they failed to detect and correct problems within the maintenance organization.
- Repair of inoperative aircraft systems and components were improperly deferred.
- Aircraft maintenance records could not be used to substantiate that the requirements had been met.
- Audit methods and techniques did not address compliance with regulatory safety standards.
- Two individuals, one for base maintenance and one for line maintenance, shared the required position of director of maintenance.

During the inspection period, Alaska Airlines verified the heavy maintenance inspections performed on 79 of its aircraft. FAA inspectors closely oversaw this validation process. The airline is currently working with the FAA to correct the deficiencies outlined in the inspection. Alaska Airlines recently submitted – and the FAA accepted – revised procedures to its general maintenance manual.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 42-00
Monday, June 5, 2000
Contact: Rebecca Trexler
Phone: 202-267-3462

FAA to Charge Overflight Fees

WASHINGTON—The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today announced aircraft operators will be required to pay fees for air traffic control services provided to aircraft that operate in U.S. airspace, but do not take off or land in the United States. Unlike other aircraft operations, these "overflights" have not been paying for the FAA air traffic control services they receive.

"This rule assesses fees directly related to services provided by one of the safest air traffic control systems in the world," said FAA Chief Financial Officer Donna F. McLean. "The charging of overflight fees is consistent with the practices of almost every other nation and will recover most of the costs of the services provided."

The authority to charge fees to aircraft conducting U.S. overflights was contained in the Federal Aviation Reauthorization Act of 1996. The agency issued an interim final rule in 1997 but a U.S. Court of Appeals decision in January 1998 determined that FAA's calculation of fees was inconsistent with the statute. In today's interim final rule, FAA has based its new overflight fees on the agency's costs as calculated by the FAA's recently developed cost accounting system.

Under the new rule, fees will be based on the distance flown through U.S.-controlled airspace. Overflights will be charged at the rate of $37.43 per 100 nautical miles in the enroute environment, and $20.16 per 100 nautical miles in the oceanic environment. These fees will apply to operators of aircraft that fly over U.S.-controlled airspace. There are some exceptions. No charges will be assessed on military and civilian aircraft operated by the U.S. government or by a foreign government. In addition, users who accrue $250 or less in fees per month will not be charged for these operations.

The FAA will bill users by sending a monthly invoice. Affected users are requested to designate and submit to the FAA the name and address of a U.S. agent for billing. Users not providing a billing address will be billed at the address of record of the aircraft owner as maintained in the country where the aircraft is registered.

- more -

The fees will go into effect Aug. 1. The FAA will hold a meeting June 29 to hear comments from the public and will accept public comment until Oct. 4, 120 days after the interim final rule's publication in the *Federal Register*. A final rule will be issued after a thorough review of public comments. For a copy of the interim final rule, check the Department of Transportation's docket web site at http://dms.dot.gov. The docket number is FAA-2000-7018.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 43-00
Thurs., June 8, 2000
Contact: Rebecca Trexler
Phone: 202-267-3883

FAA Strengthens Security Procedures for Law Enforcement Officers Flying with Weapons

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today is issuing directives to the airports and air carriers that will strengthen procedures for verifying the credentials of law enforcement officers who need to carry arms on board aircraft or into secure areas of the airport. Today's action will not change in any way the ability of law enforcement officers to carry weapons as they have in the past.

"We learned from the GAO investigation made public last month that law enforcement credentials can be easily counterfeited using sources on the Internet," said Cathal L. Flynn, associate administrator for civil aviation security. "The law enforcement agencies are working with us to create a new counterfeit-proof credential, but in the meantime, we're intensifying airport and air carrier checks required for officers carrying arms."

Law enforcement agencies and the FAA have already begun working together on the Carriage of Weapons Task Force to develop a unique form of identification that would be difficult to counterfeit and tightly controlled. This new credential is expected to make verification more efficient and reliable. With all the agencies focusing attention on this effort as a matter of urgency, the FAA expects the new identification to become available in just a few months.

At this time, the FAA has no plans to reduce the number of law enforcement agencies with officers who are allowed to carry weapons into airport secure areas or on board aircraft.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 44-00
Tuesday, June 13, 2000
Contact: William Shumann
Phone: 202-267-3883

MEDIA ADVISORY

FAA To Hold Runway Safety National Summit

WASHINGTON- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will hold a Runway Safety National Summit June 26 – 28 in Washington, DC. The meeting will explore ways to improve safety on runways, particularly at the nation's busiest airports. Improving runway safety is one of the highest priorities in aviation safety and has proven to be a complex challenge.

Attendees will include aviation safety experts and representatives of the airlines, pilot and air traffic controller unions, general aviation groups and airports. The summit will focus on the recommendations, actions and results of the FAA's nine regional workshops, human factors symposium and other industry-wide activities now under way to improve runway safety.

Administrator Jane F. Garvey will open and participate in the summit; National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Jim Hall will be the keynote dinner speaker on Tuesday, June 27, and Kenneth M. Mead, Inspector General of the Department of Transportation, will speak on Tuesday.

The Summit will be at the Washington Hilton and Towers, 1919 Connecticut Ave. NW. Accredited news media representatives who want to attend should call William Shumann at (202) 267-9294 or Drucella Andersen at (202) 493-4152.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
PRESS RELEASES HTTP://WWW.FAA.GOV/APA/PR
800 INDEPENDENCE AVE., WASHINGTON D.C., 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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June 13, 2000
Contact: Eliot Brenner
Phone: 202-267-3883

OPENING COMMENTS FOR JANE GARVEY WHITE HOUSE PRESS BRIEFING

As you know, demand for air travel has been growing steadily. Unfortunately, the FAA budget is strained and that's affecting our ability to deal with the growing number of flights.

The Senate Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee marked-up the Transportation Appropriations Bill this morning. Although FAA's capital accounts were appropriately funded, FAA's Operations account was cut about $250 million below the President's request.

While we will not compromise safety, this reduction could create substantial delays in a system already strained to meet the demands arising from the rapid growth in air travel.

As the economy has grown over the past several years, air travel has increased significantly. Some 650 million people traveled last year. We estimate that a billion people will fly annually by 2010. We're seeing the number of flights go up roughly four percent a year.

In March, the Administration asked Congress for a $77 million urgent supplemental for this year. It is included in the Senate Agriculture Appropriations bill, but it has not passed the Senate yet.

Let me tell you what it means if we cannot get that money this year. We will not be able to hire 170 more safety inspectors and medical certification staff. The number of safety inspections will be cut 10,000 below last year's level.

In addition, we will have to reduce maintenance for critical air traffic control systems which will result in more frequent equipment outages, increased time to restore these outages, and greater air traffic delays during the busy summer travel season.

The issue is broader than just the need for a supplemental. For FY2001, the Administration has requested $6.59 billion for FAA Operations.

During the past two years, FAA has faced a very tight budget for operations, and has lived within its budget by implementing a hiring freeze in many areas, putting off maintenance, deferring training, drawing down our stock of spare parts, and reducing the

redundancies within our communications network.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 45-00
Tuesday, June 13, 2000
Contact: Paul Takemoto
Phone: 202-267-8521

FAA Gives El Salvador IASA Rating of Category 2

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today announced that El Salvador does not comply with international safety standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), giving the country a Category 2 rating following an evaluation of information currently available on the country's civil aviation authority.

This announcement is part of the FAA's International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) program, under which the agency assesses the civil aviation authorities of all countries with air carriers that operate to the U.S., and makes that information available to the public.

The assessments are not an indication of whether individual foreign carriers are safe or unsafe; rather, they determine whether or not foreign civil aviation authorities are meeting ICAO safety standards, not FAA regulations.

The FAA will continue to work with the civil aviation authority of El Salvador to address the safety and operational oversight issues that do not meet ICAO safety standards.

The FAA believes that El Salvador is committed to internationally agreed-upon safety oversight obligations as evidenced by the country's strong support of the new Central American Agency for Flight Safety (ACSA). ACSA is part of the Central American Corporation for Air Navigation Services (COCESNA) agency; its primary responsibility will be to provide flight safety oversight for the region.

Travelers may call 1-800-FAA-SURE (1-800-322-7873) to obtain a summary statement about whether a foreign civil aviation authority has been assessed and the results, if available.

Countries with air carriers that fly to the U.S. must adhere to the safety standards of ICAO, the United Nations' technical agency for aviation that establishes international standards and recommended practices for aircraft operations and maintenance.

The FAA, with the cooperation of the host civil aviation authority, assesses countries with airlines that have operating rights to or from the United States, or have requested such rights.

Specifically, the FAA determines whether a foreign civil aviation authority has an adequate infrastructure for international aviation safety oversight as defined by ICAO standards. The basic elements that the FAA considers necessary include: 1) laws enabling the appropriate government office to adopt regulations necessary to meet the minimum requirements of ICAO; 2) current regulations that meet those requirements; 3) procedures to carry out the regulatory requirements; 4) air carrier certification, routine inspection, and surveillance programs; and 5) organizational and personnel resources to implement and enforce the above.

The FAA has established two ratings for the status of these civil aviation authorities at the time of the assessment: (1) does comply with ICAO standards, (2) does not comply with ICAO standards.

- **Category 1, Does Comply with ICAO Standards:** A civil aviation authority has been assessed by FAA inspectors and has been found to license and oversee air carriers in accordance with ICAO aviation safety standards.

- **Category 2. Does Not Comply with ICAO Standards:** The Federal Aviation Administration assessed this country's civil aviation authority (CAA) and determined that it does not provide safety oversight of its air carrier operators in accordance with the minimum safety oversight standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). This rating is applied if one or more of the following deficiencies are identified: (1) the country lacks laws or regulations necessary to support the certification and oversight of air carriers in accordance with minimum international standards; (2) the CAA lacks the technical expertise, resources, and organization to license or oversee air carrier operations; (3) the CAA does not have adequately trained and qualified technical personnel; (4) the CAA does not provide adequate inspector guidance to ensure enforcement of, and compliance with, minimum international standards; and (5) the CAA has insufficient documentation and records of certification and inadequate continuing oversight and surveillance of air carrier operations. This category consists of two groups of countries.

  One group are countries that have air carriers with existing operations to the United States at the time of the assessment. While in Category 2 status, carriers from these countries will be permitted to continue operations at current levels under heightened FAA surveillance. Expansion or changes in services to the United States by such carriers are not permitted while in category 2, although new services will be permitted if operated using aircraft wet-leased from a duly authorized and properly supervised U.S. carrier or a foreign air carrier from a category 1 country that is authorized to serve the United States using its own aircraft.

  The second group are countries that do not have air carriers with existing operations to the United States at the time of the assessment. Carriers from these countries will not be permitted to commence service to the United States while in

Category 2 status, although they may conduct services if operated using aircraft wet-leased from a duly authorized and properly supervised U.S. carrier or a foreign air carrier from a Category 1 country that is authorized to serve the United States with its own aircraft.

No other difference is made between these two groups of countries while in a category 2 status.

The FAA has assisted civil aviation authorities with less than acceptable ratings by providing technical expertise, assistance with inspections, and training courses. The FAA hopes to work with other countries through ICAO to address non-compliance with international aviation safety oversight standards.

The FAA will continue to release the results of safety assessments to the public as they are completed. First announced in September 1994, the ratings are part of an ongoing FAA program to assess all countries with air carriers that operate to the United States.

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

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 46-00
June 16, 2000
Contact: Tammy Jones
Phone: 202-267-3462

FAA Puts NAS Architecture Data on the Internet

WASHINGTON – In a key move to continue collaboration with aviation system users, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has put its National Airspace System (NAS) Architecture online.

Last year, the FAA released its strategic plan to modernize the NAS. This plan, the NAS Architecture Version 4.0, was the result of the agency's intensive work with industry partners to address the growing demands in the aviation system.

The NAS Architecture projects 15 years into the future for NAS modernization and is balanced against anticipated future funding. Since its release, the NAS Architecture's comprehensive modernization strategy has been updated to reflect current funding profiles and priorities. The dynamic nature of the architecture is one of the reasons why the FAA established the NAS Architecture database.

"This is an unprecedented opportunity to view the complex and interdependent nature of the NAS Architecture, maintain an ongoing dialogue with aviation system users, and adjust priorities according to changes in funding or deployment plans," said Steve Zaidman, Associate Administrator for Research and Acquisitions.

The NAS Architecture data can be accessed through the Capability and Architecture Tool Suite, which includes a web browser interface (http://www.nas-architecture.faa.gov). Using the Internet to share the latest NAS Architecture data is key to continued collaboration with aviation system users.

A representative set of programmatic and technical data is contained in the architecture and is continually updated so that the database represents the best available data. The richness of the information will grow over time as more details on individual implementation steps for modernization are developed.

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The database was developed to identify the complexities and interrelationships of NAS components as a systems engineering tool. Multiple views of the information contained in the database are available to help those interested in aviation to understand the details of the NAS infrastructure.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, June 20, 2000
Contact: Marcia Adams/Tammy Jones
Phone: 202-267-3462

Fact Sheet: FAA Proposes Modification to Part 139 – Certification and Operations: Land Airports Serving Certain Air Carriers

HISTORY

- On Wednesday, June 21, 2000, the FAA issued an notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) proposing changes to 14 CFR part 139 - Certification and Operations: Land Airports Serving Certain Air Carriers.
- Currently, a part 139 certificate is required for airports with scheduled and unscheduled operations of air carrier aircraft with more than 30 seats.
- The proposal was initiated to respond to NTSB and GAO recommendations and changes to the authorizing statute.
- The last comprehensive revision of part 139 was in November 1987.
- The FAA Reauthorization Act of 1996 broadened FAA's authority to certificate airports to include airports serving scheduled air carrier operations conducted in aircraft with 10-30 seats, except in the state of Alaska. Existing certificate authority remained unchanged.
- FAA's new authority requires the agency to identify and consider a reasonable number of regulatory alternatives that are "least costly, most cost-effective or the least burdensome" but still provides a comparable level of safety as provided at currently certificated airports.
- FAA implements statutory authority to issue requirements for the certification and operation of certain land airports under 14 CFR part 139. Under current part 139, airport operator must ensure that certain safety requirements are met, including maintenance of runway and taxiway pavement, marking and lighting; notification of air carriers of unsafe or changed conditions; and preparedness for aircraft accidents and other emergencies.
- Presently, only airports serving air carriers operations conducted in aircraft with more than 30 seats are required to have an airport operating certificate. Two types of airport operating certificates are issued under part 139, depending on whether the airport is serving scheduled or unscheduled air carrier operations.
- FAA conducts periodic airport inspections for part 139 compliance.

PROPOSED CHANGES

- Several administrative changes are proposed to incorporate a new category of airports - airports serving scheduled air carrier operations conducted in aircraft with 10-30 seats.
- The NPRM also proposes to revises current part 139 to clarify and update several requirements to better reflect current industry practices and technology, including -
  -Fire extinguishing agents;

-Personnel training requirements;
-Wildlife hazard management;
-Airport condition reporting; and
-Response to off-airport emergencies.

- Additional changes to operational standards are proposed to address NTSB recommendations for airport response to large fuel fires, and a petition for rulemaking regarding HazMat incidents.
- Based on statutory authority to exempt from aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) requirements those airports serving less than .25 percent of national enplanements, this proposal also establishes procedures for airport operators to request an exemption from ARFF requirements. This exemption process would eliminate the current informal ARFF exemption process, and would require all certificated airports to comply with part 139 ARFF requirements unless a formal exemption is granted.

IMPACT TO INDUSTRY

- All 660 airport operators that currently hold a certificated under part 139 would be affected by this proposal.
- The FAA estimates that this proposal would have initial/capital costs of approximately $3.5 million and $6 million for annual recurring costs for all airports covered by the proposal. These totals are based on average costs for a representative airport for each type of air carrier operation served and may be high. Totals include those capital improvement and equipment costs that would be eligible for Federal funds, as well as personnel costs that are not eligible for Federal funding.
- The NPRM would only require administrative action to document existing operational procedures for an estimated 350 currently certificated airports.
- Approximately 40 airports that are not certificated would be required to apply for a certificate if they want to continue serving scheduled air carrier operations in aircraft with 10-30 seats. Many of these airports already comply with part 139 requirements, and have received Federal funds (totaling $178.5 million between 1982-1997) for capital improvements that meet part 139 standards. For these airports, the FAA estimates that this proposal would have initial/capital costs of approximately $1.9 million and $1.2 million for annual recurring costs.
- At approximately 220 currently certificated airports, large air carrier operations (aircraft with more than 30 seats) only occur during a certain portion of the day, or on an infrequent basis. At these facilities, certain part 139 safety requirements are in effect only during these air carrier operations, and under this proposal, would have to be extended to cover scheduled operations of small air carrier aircraft (10-30 seats) that occur at other times than large air carrier operations. This may result in additional costs per airport ranging from $25,000 to $125,000 annually.
- If the FAA decides to issue a final rule, AIR 21 requires the FAA to issue a final rule within one year after the close of the comment period. Comment period closes September 19, 2000.
- If a final rule is issued, airport operators would be given ample time to comply. In particular, airport operators would be given additional compliance time if applying for an AOC for the first time, or if compliance requires the airport operator to secure funds, initiate construction, or procure and install equipment.
- The comment period ends September 19, 2000.

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FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 47-00
Monday, June 26, 2000
Contact: William Shumann
Phone: 202-267-3883

FAA to Buy New Ground Surveillance System for 25 Airports

WASHINGTON – The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced today it will buy a new ground surveillance system that the agency says will improve runway safety at 25 airports. FAA Administrator Jane F. Garvey made the announcement today at the opening of the agency's Runway Safety National Summit here.

Called ASDE-X, the new airport surface detection equipment will provide detailed coverage of runways and taxiways at an airport and also alert air traffic controllers in the tower to impending collisions. "ASDE-X will provide an increased level of safety at these airports, and will also give controllers detailed information about aircraft locations and movement at night and in bad weather," Garvey said. "It will help us meet or highest safety priority – reducing accidents and collisions on airport runways."

The new system provides similar data to the current ASDE-3 ground radar that is installed at 34 of the nation's busiest airports. Those airports will have the Airport Movement Area Safety System (AMASS) in operation by late 2002. AMASS is a computer enhancement to the ASDE-3 radar that alerts controllers to an impending collision on or near the runway. In essence, ASDE-X offers the functions of ASDE-3 and AMASS at less-busy and complex airports and at lower cost. The FAA plans to award a contract for production of ASDE-X in September.

Garvey said the 25 airports that will get ASDE-X were selected through a rigorous safety risk assessment the FAA and MIT conducted. The safety assessment focused on potential accidents and fatalities in determining which airports have the greatest need. (A list of the 25 proposed airports is attached.)

The Runway Safety Summit, Garvey said, is the latest in a series of steps the FAA has taken to reduce runway incursions – incidents in which an aircraft landing or taking off comes too close

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to another aircraft or ground vehicle. The number and rate of incursions increased during most of the previous decade before dropping slightly last year. However, the number of incursions increased 27 percent in the first five months of this year compared with the same period in 1999.

Garvey placed new emphasis on the runway safety program last fall by elevating it to a higher level, providing more resources and appointing a director of runway safety. This spring, the FAA held nine regional runway safety workshops around the country. These involved the entire aviation community – airlines, general aviation, airports, pilots and air traffic controllers -- in working together to share experiences and to develop ways to reduce incursions.

The Summit is a forum to share the results of nine regional workshops and a symposium on human factors the FAA held earlier this spring. It will also explore ways to increase the education, training and awareness of the hundreds of thousands of pilots, air traffic controllers and airport vehicle drivers who operate daily at more than 450 airports.

Garvey also announced the FAA will act shortly on several recent recommendations the NTSB made regarding runway safety, including modifying current taxi-into-position-and hold procedures and developing coded taxi routes at airline airports. The agency will expeditiously review the other NTSB recommendations, she said

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 48-00
Thursday, June 29, 2000
Contact: Paul Takemoto or Alison Duquette
Phone: 202-267-3462

Media Advisory

WASHINGTON – The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will hold a media briefing today at noon to announce its decision regarding Alaska Airlines' authority to conduct heavy maintenance.

The off-camera, on-the-record briefing will be held at FAA headquarters (800 Independence Ave., S.W., room 9AB), and will be conducted by Nick Lacey, director of Flight Standards Service. He will not comment on the ongoing National Transportation Safety Board investigation of the Alaska Airlines Flight 261 accident.

Only accredited media are invited. Reporters outside the Washington, D.C., area may participate via telephone. Please call Paul Takemoto or Alison Duquette for the call-in number.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 49-00
June 29, 2000
Contact: Paul Takemoto
Phone: 202-267-3462

FAA Accepts Alaska Airlines Plan

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today announced that it has accepted Alaska Airlines' airworthiness and operations action plan. For the next 30 days, the agency will continue its stringent oversight of the airline to ensure that the plan is fully implemented.

"While we are not taking away Alaska's authority to perform heavy maintenance today, we will not hesitate to do so -- or take stronger action, if the facts warrant -- if we are not satisfied with the carrier's implementation of its plan at the end of 30 days," said Nick Lacey, director of FAA's Flight Standards Service. "We are, however, encouraged by what we have seen so far."

During this time, the carrier will continue to conduct complete audits of all aircraft coming out of heavy maintenance. Additionally, FAA will still review any aircraft returned to service following heavy maintenance.

In its plan, Alaska Airlines identified actions that address FAA concerns following the agency's special inspection that was prompted by the January 31 accident of Alaska Airlines Flight 261, which is still under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board. The airline has:

- Committed to hire more than 130 mechanics; 82 of which are already on board.
- Created an executive level safety position that reports directly to the CEO.
- Filled both the directors of maintenance and operations positions.
- Completely revised the heavy maintenance procedures contained in the airline's general maintenance manual.
- Developed a new continuing analysis and surveillance program, designed to not only detect and correct any maintenance deficiencies, but improve the program through a process of data collection, analysis and corresponding changes.
- Submitted a three-year operations growth plan.

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The FAA also announced that it will be conducting special inspections of the other nine major airlines in the United States. Beginning July 17, the FAA will send teams to conduct special inspections that will focus on evaluating the overall effectiveness of critical safety programs. Teams will be comprised of members from the agency's Certification, Surveillance and Evaluation Team, employees from Headquarters and principal maintenance inspectors from different geographic locations. The special inspections are expected to take approximately 120 days.

"Considering the problems we found at Alaska, we thought it would be prudent to go back and evaluate how the other major airlines are doing in these same areas," said Lacey. "If, while conducting these evaluations, we find any safety of flight issues, we will take immediate action."

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 51-00
Friday, June 30, 2000
Contact: Rebecca Trexler
Phone: 202-267-3883

FAA and Customs Will Search Passengers' Bags For Fireworks over Holiday Weekend

WASHINGTON—Inspectors from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the U.S. Customs Service will be searching passengers' bags over the Independence Day holiday weekend to make sure passengers are not carrying fireworks that could be hazardous during flight.

"Even the smallest sparklers could be deadly if they ignited during flight, and they are all strictly prohibited," said Cathal L. Flynn, associate administrator for FAA Civil Aviation Security. "Our agents will join with Customs' agents to examine passengers' bags and make sure none of these dangerous goods make it on board this holiday weekend."

FAA and Customs inspectors will examine bags selected at random at major airports across the nation, in addition to looking at selected air cargo. No delays are expected due to the increased scrutiny, but passengers are reminded, as always, that they should arrive at least one hour early for domestic flights and two hours early for international flights.

The transportation of fireworks is a concern around Independence Day every year since most of the annual sales of these goods take place in June and July. Both domestic and international regulations prohibit the carriage of fireworks or firework novelty items in passengers' checked or carry-on baggage. Violators are subject to civil penalties of up to $27,500 per violation and to criminal prosecution that would carry penalties of $250,000 or more and up to five years in prison.

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

FAA News

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, DC 20591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APA 52-00
Friday, June 30, 2000
Contact: Alison Duquette
Phone: 202-267-3462

FAA Proposes Rule on Use of Airline Safety Data

WASHINGTON – In a major step toward reaching the goal of reducing the commercial aviation accident rate by 80 percent by 2007, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today proposed a rule requiring airlines to share aggregate safety data with the FAA if they choose to have a Flight Operational Quality Assurance (FOQA) program.

FOQA helps prevent accidents by identifying the root causes of potential safety issues. It uses state-of-the-art flight data recorder technology to collect and analyze data on routine flights. Airlines collect data about everyday safety trends in their operations and would now be required to share the data with the FAA. The agency would then use the data to identify industry-wide safety trends, allowing the FAA and industry to more effectively target resources and correct potential safety problems. The information and insights provided by these programs can enhance line operational safety, training effectiveness, operational procedures, maintenance and engineering procedures, air traffic control procedures, and airport surface safety. Participation in FOQA is voluntary and programs must be FAA-approved. The FAA would not use FOQA data for enforcement purposes, except in egregious cases. The rule would finalize existing FAA policy on the use of FOQA data.

"Improving safety means stopping accidents before they happen," U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater said. "Identifying trends based on real-world data allows us to be proactive in our approach to aviation safety, and advances our goal of making the world's safest aviation system even safer."

"FOQA programs are already producing the hard data we need to identify safety trends, target potential problems and make corrections before accidents happen," said FAA Administrator Jane F. Garvey. "This is an excellent example of the government and industry working together to produce results that will directly benefit the traveling public."

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Currently, eight airlines have FOQA programs, one has FAA approval pending, and five others say they plan to initiate programs in the future. There are currently 230 aircraft, which comprise 13 aircraft types, collecting FOQA data.

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) follows a July 26, 1999, proposal to protect voluntarily provided information from disclosure in order to encourage data-sharing programs such as FOQA. The notice responds to a recommendation made by the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security, chaired by Vice President Al Gore, as well as a mandate from Congress to protect information that aids in improving safety and security. FAA policy, issued Dec. 2, 1998, states that the FAA may only use safety data generated in a FOQA program for enforcement action in egregious cases.

Under FOQA, the FAA approves the airline's program for routine collection and analysis of in-flight data from the digital flight data recorder (DFDR). The airline establishes procedures for taking corrective action when problems are identified and for informing the FAA. Most importantly, the airline provides the FAA with access to the aggregate data so the agency can monitor safety trends as well as the operator's effectiveness in correcting adverse trends. Technological advances in cockpit equipment and data analysis over the past decade have helped make FOQA possible. Previously, this information was used to identify clues to accidents after they had already occurred.

FOQA programs have already yielded important safety advances. Since 1995, an FAA-sponsored FOQA Demonstration Study with four airlines has produced data that has been used to improve the safety of approaches at more than a dozen airports worldwide. In addition, it documented unusual autopilot disconnects, Ground Proximity Warning System warnings, excessive take-off angles, unstable landing approaches, hard landings and compliance with standard operating procedures. FOQA data has also been used for monitoring fuel efficiency, enhancing engine condition monitoring, noise abatement compliance, rough runway surfaces and aircraft structural fatigue.

The NPRM is on display at the *Federal Register* and is available on the FAA's web site at www.faa.gov/avr/armhome.htm. The comment period closes on Oct. 3.

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An electronic version of this news release is available via the World Wide Web at http://www.faa.gov/apa/pr/index.cfm