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Issuance of change to
FAR Part 121

Title 14—AERONAUTICS AND SPACE

Chapter I—Federal Aviation Agency

[Docket No. 6722; Amdt. 121-13]

PART 121—CERTIFICATION AND OPERATIONS: DOMESTIC, FLAG, AND SUPPLEMENTAL AIR CARRIERS AND COMMERCIAL OPERATORS OF LARGE AIRCRAFT

Minimum Altitudes for Use of Automatic Pilot

The purpose of this amendment is to authorize FAR Part 121 certificate holders to obtain amendments to their operations specifications to permit the use of an automatic pilot with an approach coupler to touchdown when certain criteria are met.

This amendment is based on a notice of proposed rule making (Notice 65-13), issued on June 15, 1965, and published in the FEDERAL REGISTER on June 26, 1965 (30 F.R. 8009). The basis for this amendment is fully discussed in that notice.

The comments received in response to Notice 65-13 generally concurred with the adoption of this amendment. Two industry associations questioned that part of the proposal that would limit the approval of a flight control guidance system with automatic capability to touchdown, to a system that does not contain any altitude loss factor specified in the airplane flight manual (i.e., the altitude loss must be zero). These comments indicated that this limitation would prevent operational approval of a system that allowed small changes from the intended flight path that are easily controllable and in no way unsafe. These comments apparently refer to an altitude change that might occur during the transition from automatic to manual control, as opposed to an altitude change resulting from the introduction of unintentional and undesirable system response due to a failure or malfunction. The Agency does not consider the former type of change in determining the

"maximum altitude loss" that is included in the Airplane Flight Manual since as stated in § 121.579 that loss is based on "the malfunction of the automatic pilot with approach coupler." However, if it was the intent of these comments to recommend that the Agency grant operational approval, to touchdown, of a system that is capable of introducing an unintentional response, however small, the Agency disagrees, since such a system does not contain the safeguards the Agency deems necessary.

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment, and due consideration has been given to all matter presented.

Since this amendment merely authorizes the amendment of operations specifications and imposes no additional burden on anyone, I find that good cause exists for making it effective on less than 30 days notice.

In consideration of the foregoing, § 121.579 of Part 121 of the Federal Aviation Regulations is amended effective upon publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER as follows:

1. Paragraph (a) is amended by striking the words "paragraph (b)" and inserting the words "paragraphs (b) and (c)" in place thereof.

2. By adding the following new paragraph at the end thereof:

(c) Notwithstanding paragraph (a) or (b) of this section, the Administrator issues operations specifications to allow the use, to touchdown, of an approved flight control guidance system with automatic capability, in any case in which—

(1) The system does not contain any altitude loss (above zero) specified in the Airplane Flight Manual for malfunction of the automatic pilot with approach coupler; and

(2) He finds that the use of the system to touchdown will not otherwise affect the safety standards required by this section.

(Secs. 313(a), 601, 604, Federal Aviation Act of 1958; 49 U.S.C. 1364, 1421, 1424)

Issued in Washington, D.C., on November 22, 1965.

D. D. THOMAS,
Deputy Administrator.

(As published in the Federal Register /30 F.R. 14781/ on November 30, 1965)