

Title 14—Aeronautics and Space
CHAPTER I—FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

[Docket No. 13485; Amdt. 121-121]

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

Crewmember Interphone Systems for Large Turbojet-Powered Airplanes

The purpose of this amendment to Part 121 of the Federal Aviation Regulations is to permit the operation of large turbojet-powered airplanes with a crewmember interphone system that incorporates either an aural or a visual alerting signal for use by crewmembers to alert flight attendants, and for use by flight attendants to alert flight crewmembers. This amendment revokes the requirement for a two-way communication system between ground personnel and a flight attendant in the passenger cabin of those airplanes, and clarifies certain other provisions contained in Part 121.

This amendment is based on a notice of proposed rulemaking (Notice No. 75-14) issued on March 6, 1975, and published in the FEDERAL REGISTER on March 13, 1975 (40 FR 11736).

Interested persons were afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment and due consideration was given to all matters presented. Five comments were received in response to the notice. Generally, all comments received were favorable. Some commentators recommended certain changes which are discussed below. Several made suggestions that are not within the scope of the notice, and, accordingly, those comments are not discussed but will be retained by the FAA for future study.

Additionally, it should be noted, as stated in Notice 75-14, that this amendment is an amendment for which proposals were received for inclusion in the 1974-1975 Airworthiness Review Program (Notice 74-5; 39 FR 5785). As indicated in that notice and in Notice 74-5A (39 FR 18662), rulemaking procedures separate from the airworthiness review could result in removal of proposals from consideration during the Airworthiness Review Program. Accordingly, because of this amendment those proposals are not being given further consideration.

Section 121.303(d) (2) of the Federal Aviation Regulations provides that the interphone system (as well as other specified equipment) must be in operable condition for takeoff. Consequently, the requirement in § 121.319(a) (1), which provides that no person may operate an airplane unless the airplane is equipped with a crewmember interphone system that is operational at takeoff, is redundant and is revoked by this amendment.

As stated in the notice, the FAA believes the objective of FAR § 121.319(b) (5) (ii) and (iii) can be met with the use of either an aural or a visual alerting system which is capable of distinguishing between a normal and an emergency call, since there are other means available, such as the public address system, to relay calls in the event the alerting system does not operate. Moreover, the FAA has reviewed the requirement of FAR § 121.319(b) (5) (iv) for a two-way communication system between ground personnel and a flight attendant in the passenger cabin, and believes that recent experience has shown that the need for that requirement is not as great at the present time as before.

During FAA discussions with interested members of the aviation community, a question arose as to when a power source is not considered to be common to the public address and interphone systems for the purpose of complying with FAR §§ 121.318(a) (1) and 121.319(a) (2).

Sections 121.318(a) (1) and 121.319(a) (2) state that except for handsets, headsets, microphones, selector switches, and signaling devices, the public address and the crewmember interphone systems must be capable of operation independent of each other. With respect to these regulations, it should be noted that the power source is not considered to be common to the public address and interphone systems when the two systems are served by separate audio amplifiers through separate circuit breakers which receive power from at least a priority bus.

Comments received from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) state that to allow a choice between aural and visual alerting signals degrades the present rule, since a visual signal alone might not be immediately seen and redundancy would be lost. Therefore, the NTSB continues to support both aural and visual signals as is presently required in § 121.319(b) (5) (ii). As stated in the preamble to the notice the FAA does not believe this redundancy is necessary since there are other means available, such as the public address system, to relay calls in the event the crewmember interphone alerting system does not operate.

The NTSB also states that during its investigation of an aircraft accident, it found that difficulties were experienced in transmitting the order to the cabin attendants and passengers to evacuate the aircraft. Accordingly, the NTSB concluded that during an emergency communication to all sections of the aircraft is vital and that a system should be required that is independent of the main aircraft power supply. Therefore, the NTSB recommended that the FAA require all air carrier aircraft to be equipped with both an aural and visual evacuation alarm system capable of being activated in the cockpit and at each flight attendant's station and powered so that interruption of the aircraft elec-

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trical systems will not interfere with use of the evacuation alarm. Furthermore the NTSB expressed the view that a portable battery-powered megaphone required by § 121.309(f) is an inadequate, independent backup. While these comments are beyond the scope of the notice, which is limited to the alerting signal system that alerts the crewmembers to incoming calls, these comments are appreciated. In this connection, it should be noted that as a result of the NTSB's Special Study on Safety Aspects of Emergency Evacuations from Air Carrier Aircraft, it submitted to the FAA a number of safety recommendations (A-74-105 through 114). Safety recommendation A-74-111 recommended that the FAA amend § 121.318 to require, after a reasonable date, that the public address system be capable of operating on a power source independent of the main aircraft power supply. These safety recommendations are under consideration by the FAA and the NTSB comments in response to the notice will be considered in connection with those recommendations.

(Secs. 313(a), 601, 604, Federal Aviation Act of 1958 (49 U.S.C. 1354(a), 1421, 1424); sec. 8(c), Department of Transportation Act (49 U.S.C. 1655(c))

In view of the imminence of the present compliance date, I find that good cause exists for making this amendment effective on less than 30 days notice.

In consideration of the foregoing, § 121.319 of the Federal Aviation Regulations is amended, effective September 8, 1975, by revoking and reserving paragraph (a) (1); by revising paragraph (b) (5) (ii); and by amending paragraph (b) (5) (iv) to read as follows:

§ 121.319 Crewmember interphone system.

(a) * * *

(1) [Reserved]

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(b) * * *

(5) * * *

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(ii) It must have an alerting system incorporating aural or visual signals for use by flight crewmembers to alert flight attendants and for use by flight attendants to alert flight crewmembers;

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(iv) When the airplane is on the ground, it must provide a means of two-way communication between ground personnel and either of at least two flight crewmembers in the pilot compartment. The interphone system station for use by ground personnel must be so located that personnel using the system may avoid visible detection from within the airplane.

Issued in Washington, D.C., on September 5, 1975.

JAMES E. DOW,
Acting Administration.

(As published in the Federal Register [40 FR 42185] on September 11, 1975)

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