



Federal Aviation Administration

Memorandum

Date: February 27, 2015

To: See Distribution List

From: David W. Hempe, Manager, Design, Manufacturing, & Airworthiness
Division, AIR-100 

Prepared by: John C. Barry, Navigation and Flight Deck Technologies Section, AIR-131

Subject: Extension of Withdrawal Date for Technical Standard Order Authorizations (TSOA) for TSO-C121 and TSO-C121a Underwater Locating Devices (Acoustic) (Self-Powered)

Memo No.: AIR100-15-130-PM12

Purpose

This memorandum explains the rationale for delaying the withdrawal of TSOAs allowing manufacturers to produce articles per TSO-C121 and TSO-C121a, Underwater Locating Devices (ULD) (Acoustic) (Self-Powered).

Background

The FAA published a Notice in the Federal Register, volume 76, page 52734, announcing the planned revocation of TSO-C121 and TSO-C121a authorizations on August 23, 2011. On March 5, 2012, the FAA confirmed the planned revocation date of no later than March 1, 2015, by Notice in the Federal Register, Volume 77, page 13174. On March 5, the FAA will published a Federal Register notice (see attached) "Underwater Locating Devices (Acoustic) (Self-Powered)," announcing the delay of the planned withdrawal of TSO-C121 and TSO-C121a authorizations until December 1, 2015.

Only two manufacturers currently hold authorizations under TSO-C121 or TSO-C121a. Both manufacturers are now authorized to produce longer duration TSO-C121b units as envisioned by the 2012 Federal Register notice. Although both manufacturers received approval to manufacture devices meeting the current standard, the TSO authorization by itself does not authorize installation in an aircraft. Recent events have driven additional testing requirements for installation of lithium batteries, which these devices contain. The FAA received and accepted test data for the newly approved TSO-C121b devices which support these installations.

A major aircraft manufacturer requested additional time to complete testing and analysis of the TSO-C121b device installations. They also requested additional time to update their part

numbers and drawings in their various Type Certificated aircraft once the analysis was complete. This additional time will prevent a disruption in aircraft production as the documentation is updated to reflect the current production of TSO-C121b devices.

Action Required

Withdrawing TSO-C121 and TSO-C121a and authorizing TSO-C121b ensures future ULD designs will have a minimum operating life of 90 days. The FAA expects attrition of TSO-C121 and TSO-C121a approved ULDs to occur as older ULDs are replaced by TSO-C121b approved ULDs.

The Atlanta and Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Offices (ACOs) have manufacturers in their geographic areas with TSOAs for TSO-C121 and/or TSO-C121a. The Design, Manufacturing, and Airworthiness Division (AIR-100) asks that you please assist facilitating withdrawal of those TSOA in writing effective December 1, 2015. Also, AIR-100 asks that the Atlanta ACO rescind the withdrawal letter issued January 12, 2015.

The “withdrawal of a TSOA” means that a specific authorization letter is withdrawn by the FAA and the approval to manufacture that particular article under the TSO is terminated. This action requires a letter be sent to each authorized manufacturer stating the withdrawal of the authorization. The FAA’s authority to withdrawal a TSOA is found in 14 CFR §21.613 and in Order 8150.1b paragraph 11.d.2

The two companies authorized to manufacture TSO-C121 and TSO-C121a ULDs are;

Dukane Seacom
7135 16th Street East, Suite 101
Sarasota, FL 34243
United States

RJE International
15375 Barranca Pkwy, Suite 1-112
Irvine, CA 92618
United States

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. John C. Barry at (202) 267-1575.

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Attachment