

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Aviation Administration****14 CFR Part 121****[Docket No. FAA-2001-10770; SFAR 92-5]****RIN 2120-AH97****Flightcrew Compartment Access and Door Designs****AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** This action supersedes Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) 92-4, which was published on March 19, 2002, to allow operators to quickly modify the flightcrew compartment door to delay or deter unauthorized entry to the flightcrew compartment. This action temporarily authorizes variances from existing design standards for the doors and certain operational rules associated with the modifications. It allows for approval for return to service of modified airplanes without prior approved data if the modification constitutes a major alteration. This action prohibits the possession of flightdeck compartment door keys by other than the flightcrew during flight, unless the flightdeck door has an internal flightdeck locking device installed, operative, and in use. This action extends regulatory relief for all-cargo transport category airplanes and a limited number of passenger airplanes beyond April 9, 2003.

**DATES:** This action is effective April 9, 2003 and shall remain in effect until rescinded.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dave Rich, Certification Procedures Branch, Aircraft Certification Service, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20591; telephone: (202) 267-7141; e-mail address: [9-awa-avr-design@faa.gov](mailto:9-awa-avr-design@faa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Availability of This Action**

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**Background**

The September 11, 2001, hijacking events demonstrated that some persons are willing to hijack airplanes and use them as weapons against the citizens of the United States. This safety and security threat was not anticipated and, therefore, not considered in the design of transport airplanes. The hijackings made clear the critical need to improve the security of the flightcrew compartment.

On November 16, 2001, Congress enacted the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, Pub. L. 107-71. Section 104(a)(1)(B) of the Act requires the FAA to issue an order requiring the strengthening of the flightdeck door and locks on certain passenger carrying airplanes.

**Flightcrew Compartment Door Designs**

Flightcrew compartment doors on transport category airplanes have been designed principally to ensure privacy, so pilots could focus their entire attention on their normal and emergency flight duties. The doors have not been designed to provide an impenetrable barrier between the cabin and the flightcrew compartment. Doors

have not been required to meet any significant security threat, such as small arms fire or shrapnel, or the exercise of brute force to enter the flightcrew compartment.

Besides affording an uninterrupted work environment for the flightcrew, flightcrew compartment doors often must meet other important safety standards. Should there be a sudden decompression of the airplane, separate compartments within the airplane, like the cabin and the crew compartments, must be designed so that the pressure differential that is created does not compromise the basic airplane structure. Certification standards require that airplane designs provide a method to compensate for decompression in a manner that avoids significant damage to the airplane. In many cases, flightcrew compartment doors provide the pressure compensation by being vented or swinging open to equalize the pressure between the cabin and the flightcrew compartment.

In addition, design standards require that the flightcrew have a path to exit the flightcrew compartment in an emergency, if the cockpit window exits are not usable. Flightcrew compartment doors have been designed to provide this escape path. But this escape feature may also enable easier unauthorized entry into the flightcrew compartment from the cabin.

Operating regulations, in particular § 121.379(b) in the case of a major alteration, require the work to be done in accordance with technical data approved by the Administrator. Operating regulations for airlines also require that each crewmember have a key readily available to open doors between passengers and an emergency exit. Some airlines issue flightcrew compartment door keys to all their crewmembers. This allows flight attendants to enter the flightcrew compartment and assist the flightcrew in an emergency, such as incapacitation of a flight crewmember. But it also offers an opportunity for an individual to overpower or coerce a flight attendant, take away the key, and enter the flightcrew compartment.

This SFAR authorized a temporary period during which non-compliance with design requirements were allowed when improvements to flightcrew compartment security were made. In addition, the FAA waived procedural requirements applicable to major alterations (§ 121.379(b)), the approval of service information and requirements for production of parts for door modifications.