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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002–NM–282–AD; Amendment 39–13227; AD 2003–14–08]

RIN 2120–AA64

#### Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 737–600, 737–700, 737–700C, 737–800, 737–900, 757, and 767 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD); applicable to all Boeing Model 737–600, 737–700, 737–700C, 737–800, 737–900, 757, and 767 series airplanes; that requires revising the Airplane Flight Manual (AFM) to advise the flightcrew to don oxygen masks as a first and immediate step when a cabin altitude warning occurs. This action is necessary to prevent incapacitation of the flightcrew due to lack of oxygen, which could result in loss of control of the airplane. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

**DATES:** Effective August 18, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Information pertaining to this AD may be examined at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, Rules Docket, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Donald Eiford, Aerospace Engineer, Systems and Equipment Branch, ANM–130S, FAA, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (425) 917–6465; fax (425) 917–6590.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to

include an airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to all Boeing Model 737–600, 737–700, 737–700C, 737–800, 737–900, 757, and 767 series airplanes was published in the **Federal Register** on February 24, 2003 (68 FR 8560). That action proposed to require revising the Airplane Flight Manual (AFM) to advise the flightcrew to don oxygen masks as a first and immediate step when a cabin altitude warning occurs.

#### Comments

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. The FAA has duly considered the comments received.

#### Support for the Proposed AD

One commenter concurs with the proposed AD, and several other commenters had no objection to the proposed AD.

#### Request To Modify Cabin Altitude Warning System

One commenter notes that there is no “CABIN ALT” or “CABIN ALTITUDE” warning light in the Boeing Model 737–800 series airplanes that it operates, and for this reason, the commenter suspects that the proposed AD does not apply to its airplanes. The commenter states that the only warning of excessive cabin altitude is the intermittent warning horn. The commenter suggests that the cabin altitude warning system installed on the airplane could be greatly enhanced by a modification that would give the flightcrew a visual warning of improper altitude. The commenter also suggests that the cabin altitude warning should be duplicated in the forward and aft galley areas.

We infer that the commenter is requesting clarification of the applicability and requirements of this proposed AD. We agree that such clarification is needed. Our intent was for this AD to apply to all airplanes listed in the applicability, regardless of the equipment associated with the cabin altitude warning system. We have confirmed with the airplane manufacturer that the Model 737–600, –700, –700C, –800, and –900 series airplanes subject to this AD have a cabin altitude warning horn instead of a warning light. Thus, we have revised Figure 1 of this AD to replace the reference to the illumination of the cabin altitude light with a reference to

the sounding of the cabin altitude warning horn.

Further, with regard to the commenter’s specific requests to add a cabin warning light on the flight deck and duplicate the cabin altitude warning in the forward and aft galley areas, we acknowledge the concerns of the commenter. While there may be merit to the commenter’s suggestions, this AD is not the appropriate context in which to evaluate those suggestions. We have determined that the cabin altitude warning horn is an adequate means to alert the flightcrew to an unsafe condition and provides an acceptable level of safety when combined with the changes to procedures required by this AD. No further change to the AD is necessary in this regard.

#### Request To Coordinate Rulemaking Activity

One commenter notes that its understanding is that AD 2003–03–15, amendment 39–13039 (68 FR 4892, January 31, 2003), may be revised in the future. (The proposed AD explains that the proposed actions are similar to those in AD 2003–03–15.) The commenter asks us to consider establishing a common compliance time between the proposed AD and any future revision of AD 2003–03–15. The commenter states that it would like to accomplish all AFM changes in a one-time effort to ensure consistency and standardization among its manuals, especially for similar airplane fleets. Related to consistency and standardization, the commenter is also concerned about the variations in operational procedures in the AFM revisions. The commenter states that, while the AFM may differ in format from one model to another, there should not be procedural differences related to responding to a cabin altitude warning.

We acknowledge the commenter’s concerns but do not concur with the commenter’s request. We find that it is not possible to establish a common compliance time between this AD and a possible future proposed AD, because the timelines for these rulemaking actions are different. We have already proposed this AD and allowed opportunity for the public to comment, but, at this time, we are still considering further rulemaking to revise AD 2003–03–15. In light of the identified unsafe condition, we find that it would be