

UPRIGHT POSITION OF SEAT BACKS FOR TAKEOFF AND LANDING

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It has been brought to our attention that flight attendant's were being advised that it was not necessary to place the seat backs in the fully upright position for takeoff and landing, because "upright" has never been defined.

- a. Section 121.311(d) of the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR), except as provided in subparagraphs (1) and (2), requires the seat back to be in the upright position for takeoff and landing.
- b. Transport category airplanes are customarily provided with seats that have been assessed against FAR Part 25 standards and become part of an approved interior of the particular type design. This involves many factors including emergency evacuation considerations. The seats, their pitch, location, and unit approval are involved. When reclined to any degree, they are not in the upright position for emergency evacuation which must be demonstrated during aircraft certification. Hence, our interpretation of FAR Section 121.311(d), except as provided in subparagraphs (1) and (2), is that the seat back must be in this fully upright position, not in any reclined position, for takeoff and landing, so as to assure the degree of safety intended for emergency evacuation.
- c. Principal inspectors should be aware of the foregoing and should assure that their assigned certificate holders require that the seat backs are placed in the fully upright position for takeoff and landing.