



**U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
Federal Aviation  
Administration**

# SAFO

Safety Alert for Operators

SAFO 21003  
DATE: 7/21/21

Flight Standards Service  
Washington, DC

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*A SAFO contains important safety information and may include recommended action. Besides the specific action recommended in a SAFO, an alternative action may be as effective in addressing the safety issue named in the SAFO. The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.*

**Subject:** Inspection of Lavatory Fire Extinguishing Bottles on Aircraft Parked or Stored for a Prolonged Period of Time in a High-Temperature Environment.

**Purpose:** This SAFO serves to inform operators about the importance of inspecting lavatory fire extinguishing bottles as part of their return-to-service maintenance checks on aircraft that have been parked or stored for a prolonged period in a high-temperature environment (i.e. any environment where temperatures in the aircraft cabin are likely to reach levels that could trigger lavatory fire extinguishing bottles to discharge). This information applies to Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) Part 91 K, Part 121, Part 125, and Part 135 operators.

**Background:** The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reviewed numerous Original Equipment Manufacturer's (OEM) Aircraft Maintenance Manuals (AMM), specifically Chapter 10, Parking, Mooring, Storage and Return to Service sections. The review revealed inconsistencies with the need to perform an inspection of lavatory fire extinguishing bottles when an aircraft is returned to service following a prolonged storage period. Some AMMs contain procedures for inspecting the lavatory fire extinguishing bottles, while others do not.

**Discussion:** Due to a reduction in air travel, operators placed large numbers of their aircraft into long-term parking or storage. In some cases, operators parked or stored aircraft in various locations conducive to a high temperature environment in the cabin. Recently, demand for air travel has increased and aircraft are being returned to service.

The FAA has received reports of numerous lavatory fire extinguishing bottles found discharged across multiple fleets and different fleet types following a prolonged period in a high-temperature environment. These discharges were likely caused by high aircraft cabin temperatures experienced during parking or storage. There is a concern that when a parked or stored aircraft is returned to service, discharged lavatory fire extinguishing bottles may go undetected and would pose a safety risk to aircraft operations in case of a lavatory trash bin fire.

Depending on the manufacturer/model/part number, the lavatory fire extinguishing bottle may have a pressure gauge, or it may need to be weighed to determine serviceability.

**Recommended Action:** Operators should inspect lavatory fire extinguishing bottles on in-service aircraft that were parked or stored for a prolonged period in a high-temperature environment, if such inspection was not performed as part of the return-to service checks. Operators should also add this inspection to any future return-to-service aircraft. Operators should consider meeting with their appropriate Principal Maintenance Inspectors to discuss inspection procedures that include the lavatory fire extinguishing bottles.

**Contact:** Questions or comments regarding this SAFO should be directed to the Aircraft Evaluation Division, email: [9-avs-afs-100@faa.gov](mailto:9-avs-afs-100@faa.gov).