

NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N 8900.262

National Policy

Effective Date:
5/6/14

Cancellation Date:
5/6/15

SUBJ: Review of Weight and Balance Control Programs Including Special Cargo Operations

1. Purpose of This Notice. This notice informs and provides guidance to the aviation safety inspectors (ASI) of a policy change to the Weight and Balance (W&B) Control Program for all Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 121 operations.

2. Audience. The primary audiences for this notice are the regional Flight Standards District Offices (FSDO), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) headquarters (HQ), certificate management offices (CMO), principal maintenance inspectors (PMIs), principal operations inspectors (POIs) and certificate-holding district offices (CHDO). The secondary audience includes Flight Standards branches and divisions in the regions and in HQ.

3. Where You Can Find This Notice. You can find this notice on the MyFAA employee Web site at https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices. Inspectors can access this notice through the Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS) at <http://fsims.avs.faa.gov>. Operators can find this notice on the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Web site at <http://fsims.faa.gov>. This notice is available to the public at http://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/orders_notices.

4. Background. On April 29, 2013, a Boeing 747-428BCF crashed just after takeoff from Afghanistan. This aircraft was under contract to the United States Department of Defense (DOD), and was transporting heavy military vehicles. The FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) immediately started investigating the accident, which is on-going. In May 2013, the Flight Standards Service (AFS) began a review of guidance to see if it was adequate or needed enhancement. Operator W&B manuals were sampled for information about special cargo loads. This analysis of operator W&B manuals resulted in the issuance of Safety Alert for Operators (SAFO) 13005, 14 CFR Part 121 Air Carriers Transporting Heavy Vehicle Special Cargo Loads; and SAFO 13008, Part 121 Air Carriers Performing Special Cargo Loads Operations. The intent of these SAFO publications was to emphasize the importance of information dissemination and education about special cargo loads and restraints.

5. Discussion. AFS established the Cargo Focus Team (CFT) as a technical support organization for principal inspectors (PI). This is the first iteration of focus teams in AFS. Focus teams are intended to provide direct support to field office personnel on subject matter that requires specialized expertise not often available to the field. The CFT is a permanent resource in

air cargo operations available for the field and is intended to provide direct technical validation of operator cargo procedures documents and support for technical decisions related to cargo. The CFT will be required to review air cargo operations manuals and W&B manuals to provide concurrence for approval of those documents to PIs. For consistency of application, all non-routine issues related to cargo operations must be discussed with the CFT. Special cargo, for the purpose of this notice, is non-standard and irregular in nature, and may require special handling or restraint using restraint devices other than a unit load device (ULD).

6. Actions. The PMI and POI will open an entry in the Program Tracking and Reporting Subsystem (PTRS) using either activity code 1088 or 3088 *and* place the words “WBM Review” in the “National Use” box. The PMI, in coordination with the POI that has assigned oversight responsibility for part 121 air carriers, will do a cursory review of the carrier’s W&B control program using the job aids and timelines at <https://avssp.faa.gov/avs/afs300/SharedInfo/default.aspx>, in the “Risk Cargo Matrix Schedule” folder under the “Cargo Risk Matrix/Job Aid” heading. In conducting the review, emphasis should be placed on the integration of the manual into the operator’s operation.

a. CFT Concurrence. The PMI/POI will send the appropriate manuals to the CFT for review and recommendation for approval.

Note: The CFT will review the W&B manuals and any major program changes to ensure the air carrier has addressed all policies, procedures, methods, and elements involved in the transport of cargo and make recommendation to the PI for approval.

b. Required Documents. For CFT review, send notification to the CFT office email (9-AWA-AFS-300-Correspondence/AWA/FAA). The PMI/POI will forward the following documents to <https://avssp.faa.gov/avs/afs300/SharedInfo/default.aspx>:

- Air carrier’s complete W&B control program manual(s), such as ground operations, flight operations, ramp operations, fueling and cargo loading;
- Supporting documentation, such as source documents and deviations;
- Training programs associated with W&B, load manifest and cargo loading to include special cargo and cargo restraint, and personnel qualifications.

c. Notification. The PMI/POI will receive a notification via email upon receipt of the documents from the CFT. At completion of the review, a memorandum will be sent to the PMI/POI through the regional office. Completing a review is estimated to take about 45 days.

d. Close the PTRS. After completion of this activity, close the PTRS record entry.

7. Reference Material (Current Editions).

- FAA Order 8900.1, Volume 3, Chapter 47, Section 1, Evaluating an Operator/Applicant’s Weight and Balance Control Program;
- Advisory Circular (AC) 120-85, Air Cargo Operations;
- AC 120-27, Aircraft Weight and Balance Control;

- FAA-approved manufacturer weight and balance manuals;
- NAS-3610, Specification for Cargo Unit Load Devices;
- Technical Standard Order (TSO)-C90, Cargo Pallets, Nets and Containers; and
- TSO-C172, Cargo Restraint Strap Assemblies.

8. Disposition. We will incorporate this notice into the Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS) before this notice expires. Direct questions or comments to the Policy Integration Branch (AFS-270) at (202) 267-8166, for operations topics; and the Air Carrier Maintenance Branch (AFS-330) at (202) 385-6435, for airworthiness topics.

ORIGINAL SIGNED by

/s/ John S. Duncan
Director, Flight Standards Service