

TRAINING FOR FLIGHT AND CABIN CREWMEMBERS ON THE AVAILABILITY, CAPABILITIES, AND USE OF EMERGENCY FLOTATION EQUIPMENT

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As a result of a recent accident which involved a B-727 making an unscheduled landing in the water during an approach, it was disclosed that the survivors experienced difficulties with the location and use of emergency flotation equipment during the evacuation.

- a. This particular airplane was equipped with lifevests and not flotation-type seat cushions. However, some passengers either used or attempted to use the seat cushions for flotation. The passenger briefing cards in use at the time of the accident depicted the location and use of lifevests. Two crewmembers, during the post-crash investigation, stated that they assumed that the seat cushions were approved flotation devices. Two other crewmembers were not sure as to whether or not the seat cushions could be used.
- b. The survivors experienced numerous difficulties with the location, removal, donning, and inflation of their lifevests. Some passengers had difficulty removing the lifevest from the fabric pouches beneath the seats, others had difficulty in unpacking the lifevest from the sealed plastic bag, and many had difficulty inflating the lifevest. Some lifevests recovered after the accident only had one of the two chambers inflated.
- c. During the post-crash investigation, several air carriers were queried as to the type of flotation equipment on their airplanes. Some had airplanes with only flotation-type seat cushions and no lifevests, others had airplanes with only lifevests and no flotation-type seat cushions, while others had a mixed fleet with some airplanes having flotation-type seat cushions and some having lifevests.
- d. This accident indicates possible deficiencies in flight attendant and flight crewmember training programs and pretakeoff passenger briefing procedures.
- e. Accordingly, it is requested that principal operations inspectors (POI) review their assigned operator's training programs and passenger briefing procedures to ensure that:
 - (1) Flight and cabin crewmember initial and recurrent training programs include detailed information regarding the location, function, and operation of the emergency flotation equipment installed in the aircraft each crewmember operates.
 - (2) When an operator has a mixed fleet of airplanes, i.e., some having flotation-type seat cushions and some having lifevests, that procedures exist for assuring that flight and cabin crew are aware of which type of equipment is available on their airplane.

- (3) The pretakeoff passenger briefing includes the location, type, and use of any required emergency flotation equipment as required by Section 121.571(a)(1)(iv) of the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR).