

Qatar Airways 'ordered' to ground 13 Airbus planes: airline

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Qatar Airways has been told by the Qatar Civil Aviation Authority to ground 13 of its Airbus A350 planes because of degradation of fuselage surfaces.

Qatar Airways said on Thursday that it had been ordered by regulators in the Gulf state to ground 13 of its Airbus A350 aircraft over the rapid

degradation of fuselage surfaces.

The airline, one of the Gulf "big three" carriers, previously stopped accepting delivery of the [aircraft](#) over the issue, according to [media reports](#) in June.

Qatar Airways said in a statement that it had been forced to press out-of-service Airbus A330 aircraft back into operation to fill the gap left by the grounding of the 13 aircraft.

Qatar Airways has 34 A350-900 types and 19 A350-1000s in its fleet, according to an Airbus document.

"The airline is working with its [regulator](#) to ensure the continued safety of all passengers... and following the explicit written instruction of (the airline's) regulator, thirteen aircraft have now been grounded," the airline said.

Qatar Airways is regulated by the Qatar Civil Aviation Authority.

The airline's chief executive Akbar al-Baker said he expects "Airbus treats this matter with the proper attention that it requires".

"Qatar Airways will not accept anything other than aircraft that continue to offer its customers the highest possible standard of safety and the best travel experience that they deserve," he said in the statement.

"Qatar Airways expects Airbus to have established the root cause and permanently corrected the underlying condition to the satisfaction of Qatar Airways and our regulator before we take delivery of any further A350 aircraft."

The statement said the airline was "cooperating with all the leasing

companies affected by this A350 grounding who have started to inspect their impacted aircraft", without giving details of other affected parties.

Through the coronavirus pandemic, Qatar Airways positioned itself as the leading airline for repatriating stranded travellers, winning plaudits from Britain and France among other countries whose flag carriers were virtually mothballed.

More than half of the airline's fleet is made up of the mid-sized but long-range US-made Boeing 787 and French-built Airbus A350.

"We do not comment on our customers operations. As a leading aircraft manufacturer, we are always in talks with our customers. Those talks we keep confidential," Airbus said in a statement.

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