

Boeing's 1st priority is current certifications before new jet

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Boeing will focus on successfully completing plane certifications, shoring up its supply chain and improving technologies in development before launching a new plane model, said Chief Executive Dave Calhoun.

"You have to be patient, you have to get your ducks lined up," Calhoun said at a briefing at Boeing's Charleston, South Carolina factory organized Tuesday and Wednesday ahead of the Paris Air Show in late June.

The aviation giant's top technology efforts under development include greater use of composite materials and autonomous systems.

"There's a lot of homework going on, a lot of regular testing, so that if we decide to include it, it's mature enough to do so," he said.

Boeing currently has three [commercial aircraft](#) at various stages of the [certification](#) process. These include the shortest version of its best-selling 737 MAX, the 737-7, as well as the longest in the 737-10. The third jet moving through the US [regulatory process](#) is the [long-distance 777X](#).

"It's an enormous amount of work at scale to move through all of those certifications," Calhoun said.

Mike Flemming, who heads Boeing's development programs, said Wednesday that certification of the 737-7 was taking longer than expected.

"The amount of documentation that we're producing on these airplanes relative to what we've had to produce in the past is considerably much larger," said Flemming, adding that the [company](#) still hopes to receive final approval for the jet by the end of the year.

The company also expects to be cleared to undertake certification flights on the 737-10 "within this year," Flemming said.

Calhoun cited the pandemic-era [supply chain](#) constraints in explaining

the company's waiting approach to advancing new jet designs, noting that key suppliers have struggled with staffing shortages.

"Many of those suppliers make one part; and they're the only supplier that makes that part. And when they fall down and or can't respond to a rate increase, we suffer," Calhoun said. "We can't just get mad at them... We simply have to work with them."

Most recently, Boeing was forced to slow deliveries of new MAX jets because of problems with a part supplied by Spirit Aerosystems. Despite the issue, Calhoun said he has no interest in acquiring the company.

"Oh yes, we are disappointed with every next issue that occurs that limits our rates," he said. "But I believe the path forward is still a constructive path where engineers work with engineers."

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