

US proposes replacing engine-housing parts on Boeing jets like one involved in passenger's death

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The logo for Boeing appears on a screen above a trading post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, July 13, 2021. On Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023, federal officials proposed modifications and additional inspections on nearly 2,000 Boeing planes in the United States to prevent a repeat of the engine-housing breakup that killed a passenger on a Southwest Airlines flight in 2018. Credit: AP Photo/Richard Drew, File

Federal officials are proposing modifications and additional inspections on nearly 2,000 Boeing planes in the United States to prevent a repeat of the engine-housing breakup that killed a passenger on a Southwest Airlines flight in 2018.

The proposal by the Federal Aviation Administration on Tuesday largely follows recommendations that Boeing made to airlines in July. It would require replacing fasteners and other parts near the engines of many older Boeing 737s.

Airlines will have until the end of July 2028 to make the changes, which Boeing developed.

The work won't be required on Max jets, the newest version of the 737.

The FAA said it is responding to two incidents in which parts of the cowlings that cover the engines broke away from planes. One occurred in 2016, and the [fatal accident](#) happened two years later on a Southwest jet flying over Pennsylvania.

Both incidents started with broken fan blades. In the second one, the broken blade hit the engine fan case at a [critical point](#), starting a [chain reaction](#) that ended in the cowlings breaking loose and striking the plane, shattering a window and killing a 43-year-old mother of two sitting next to the window.

After the passenger's death, the FAA ordered emergency inspections of fan blades and replacement of cracked blades in similar CFM International engines. The engine manufacturer had recommended the stepped-up inspections a year before the fatal flight.

On Tuesday, the FAA said more regulations are needed to reduce the chance that engine-housing parts could break away when fan blades fail.

The new proposal would require airlines to replace fasteners on certain planes and install additional parts on all the affected 737s.

The FAA estimated the proposal would affect 1,979 planes registered in the United States.

The agency will take public comments on the proposal until Jan 26.

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