

Alaska Airlines has begun flying Boeing Max 9 jetliners again and United flies plane on Saturday

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Boeing employees listen to Stan Deal, Boeing Commercial Airplanes President and CEO and other employees in Renton, Wash., on Thursday, Jan. 25, 2024. Alaska Airlines has begun flying Boeing 737 Max 9 jetliners again, Friday, Jan. 26, for the first time since they were grounded after a panel blew out of the side of one of the airline's planes. Credit: Boeing via AP

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[they were grounded after a panel blew out](#) of the side of one of the airline's planes.

The airline said in a statement that it has completed its final [inspection](#) of their group of the aircraft. They said they resumed flying the Max 9 with a flight from Seattle to San Diego on Friday afternoon.

On Wednesday, the Federal Aviation Administration approved the inspection and maintenance process to return the planes to flying. Technicians at Alaska began inspections that night, the airline said.

The airline said they expect inspections to be completed by the end of next week, allowing the airline to operate a full flight schedule. Inspections are expected to take up to 12 hours per aircraft.

"Each of our 737-9 MAX will return to service only after the rigorous inspections are completed and each plane is deemed airworthy according to FAA requirements," the airline said in a written statement Friday.

The first United passenger flight on a Boeing MAX 9 since the panel blew out on the Alaska Airlines flight departed from Newark, New Jersey, to Las Vegas Saturday morning. The flight carried 175 passengers and six crew members.



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Boeing Commercial Airplanes president and CEO Stan Deal said in a message to Boeing employees Friday that the company's most immediate goal is to help airlines restore operations.

"Our long-term focus is on improving our quality so that we can regain the confidence of our customers, our regulator and the flying public," he wrote.

"Frankly, we have disappointed and let them down. We are deeply sorry for the significant disruption and frustration for our customers, some of

whom have been publicly and unfairly criticized," he added.

The Federal Aviation Administration has detailed the process that airlines must follow to inspect—and if necessary, repair—the panels called door plugs, one of which broke loose on Alaska Airlines flight 1282 on Jan. 5.

The plugs are used to seal holes left for extra doors on the Max 9 when an unusually high number of seats requires more exits for safety reasons.



An Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 Max 9 awaits inspection at the airline's hangar at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport on Jan. 10, 2024, in SeaTac, Wash. Alaska Airlines has begun flying Boeing 737 Max 9 jetliners again for the first time Friday, Jan. 26, since they were grounded after a panel blew out of the side of one of the airline's planes. Credit: AP Photo/Lindsey Wasson, File

Alaska Airlines grounded all 65 of its Max 9 jets within hours after one of the two door plugs in the back half of the cabin of flight 1282 blew away while 16,000 feet (about 4,900 meters) above Oregon. The FAA grounded all Max 9s in the U.S. the day after the blowout.

No passengers were seriously injured.

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