

Boeing slammed for dragging feet in Alaska Airlines probe

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Jennifer Homendy, Chair of the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), testifies before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee.

The head of the federal investigation into a troubled January flight on a

Boeing 737 MAX jet blasted the aviation giant on Wednesday for not providing key information quickly.

Two months into the probe of the January 5 Alaska Airlines flight, the National Transportation Safety Board still has not received key documents at the center of the investigation, or the names of some 25 Boeing employees who worked on the part in question, NTSB Chair Jennifer Homendy told the Senate Commerce Committee.

"We don't have the records. We don't have the names of the 25 people in charge of doing that work in that facility," Homendy said. "It's absurd that two months later we don't have that."

The remarks drew scathing criticism from lawmakers such as Texas Republican Senator Ted Cruz, who called Boeing's conduct "utterly unacceptable."

There were no serious injuries in the January 5 incident in which the Alaska Airlines flight made an [emergency landing](#) after suffering a blowout on a panel on the jet fuselage.

The fuselage was built by Boeing contractor Spirit AeroSystems, but the problem is believed to stem from maintenance on the part performed at Boeing's Renton, Washington factory in which the door plug is believed to have been removed and reinstalled.

The NTSB has previously said four bolts securing the panel were missing.

Homendy said the head of the Boeing team working on the door plug has been out on medical leave. The agency has gotten nowhere with requests to Boeing for the additional 25 employees in the team, she said.

"We've repeatedly requested from Boeing the documentation that went along with the work of opening the door plug closing the door plug or any sort of removal if that exists," Homendy said.

Boeing, which has consistently pledged "transparency" in response to the January 5 incident, said it has "deep respect" for the NTSB as it defended its responsiveness.

"Since the first moments following the Alaska Airlines Flight 1282 accident, we have worked proactively and transparently to fully support the NTSB's investigation," said a Boeing statement.

"Early in the investigation, we provided the NTSB with names of Boeing employees, including door specialists, who we believed would have relevant information," the company said.

"We have now provided the full list of individuals on the 737 door team, in response to a recent request.

"With respect to documentation, if the door plug removal was undocumented there would be no documentation to share. We will continue to cooperate fully and transparently with the NTSB's investigation."

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