

FAA misled Congress on Boeing MAX inspector training: report

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A government whistleblower agency said the FAA misled Congress on the adequacy of safety inspector training

US aviation officials misled Congress in declaring aviation inspectors were adequately prepared to assess pilot training on the Boeing 737 MAX and other planes, according to a federal report released Tuesday.

The report by the US Office of Special Counsel comes as the Federal Aviation Administration moves toward clearing the 737 MAX to resume flights after two deadly crashes grounded the planes in mid-March.

The FAA's official statements to Congress on FAA employee training "appear to have been misleading" and "do not appear reasonable," Henry Kerner, special counsel for the agency, said in a letter to the president.

"The FAA's failure to ensure inspector competency for these aircraft subjected the flying public to substantial and specific danger," said Kerner, whose agency enforces the Whistleblower Protection Act and other laws to protect [federal employees](#) from unfair reprisal.

Kerner's letter confirmed some allegations from the whistleblower, an aviation safety inspector whose name was withheld.

The letter also cited a finding by the FAA's Office of Audit and Evaluation that 16 of 22 agency [aviation](#) safety inspectors lacked proper training and accreditation.

Yet the FAA told a Senate committee in April that inspectors who participated in MAX certification were "fully qualified."

The FAA office of audit did not take an explicit position on the whistleblower allegation regarding the applicability of the lack of training to the 737 MAX, Kerner said.

But in correspondence with the Senate committee, the FAA said MAX inspectors "were fully qualified and had their own 'specific training requirements' despite the absence of evidence confirming this assertion," Kerner said.

The report comes a day after the FAA's new chief, Steve Dickson, briefed his international counterparts on the FAA's process for certifying the MAX to resume flights.

Dickson said the decision to resume flights will be up to each country, an acknowledgement of a lack of consensus among international regulators on the MAX.

Dickson also said there was still no timeframe for resuming flights in the United States. Boeing has said it expects to receive clearance to resume flights early in the fourth quarter.

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