DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Parts 25 and 121

[Docket No. 28061, Notice No. 95-1]

RIN 2120-AF01

Revised Access to Type III Exits

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT. **ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: This document proposes amendments to the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) that would adjust recently adopted requirements for access to Type III emergency exits (typically smaller over-wing exits) in transport category airplanes with 60 or more passenger seats. These adjustments reflect additional data derived from a series of tests conducted at the FAA's Civil Aeromedical Institute (CAMI) subsequent to the adoption of these requirements and are intended to relieve an unnecessary economic burden. The proposed amendments would affect air carriers and commercial operators of transport category airplanes, as well as the manufacturers of such airplanes.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before May 1, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Comments on this proposal may be mailed in triplicate to: Federal Aviation Administration, Office of the Chief Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket (AGC-200), Docket No. 28061, 800 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20591, or delivered in triplicate to: Room 915G, 800 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC. Comments delivered must be marked Docket No. 28061. Comments may be inspected in room 915G weekdays, except Federal holidays, between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. In addition, the FAA is maintaining an information docket of comments in the Office of the Assistant Chief Counsel (ANM-7), FAA, Northwest Mountain Region, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98055-4056. Comments in the information docket may be inspected in the Office of the Assistant Chief Counsel weekdays, except Federal holidays, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gary L. Killion, Manager, FAA Regulations Branch (ANM–114), Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (206) 227–2114.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in this proposed rulemaking by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Comments relating to the environmental, energy, or economic impact that might result from adopting the proposals contained in this notice are invited. Substantive comments should be accompanied by cost estimates. Commenters should identify the regulatory docket or notice number and submit comments, in triplicate, to the Rules Docket address specified above. All comments received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered by the Administrator before taking action on this proposed rulemaking. The proposals contained in this notice may be changed in light of comments received. All comments will be available in the Rules Docket, before and after the closing date for comments, for examination by interested persons. A report summarizing each substantive public contact with FAA personnel concerning this rulemaking will be filed in the Docket. Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments must submit with those comments a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket No. 28061." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRM

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the Federal Aviation Administration, Office of Public Affairs, Attention: Public Information Center, APA-230, 800 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20591, or by calling (202) 267-3484. Communications must identify the notice number of this NPRM. Persons interested in being placed on the mailing list for future rulemaking documents should also request a copy of Advisory Circular No. 11-2A, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Distribution System, which describes the application procedures.

Background

Part 25 of the FAR defines a number of different types of passenger emergency exits for use in transport category airplanes. As defined in

§25.807(a)(3), a Type III exit must have an opening not less than 20 inches wide by 36 inches high. It need not be rectangular in shape, provided a rectangle of those dimensions can be inscribed within the opening. The corner radii must not exceed one-third the width of the exit. The step-up distance inside the cabin must not exceed 20 inches. Type III exits are typically located over the wing; when so located, the step-down to the wing must not exceed 27 inches. Type III exits are typically removable hatches, but they may be hinged or tracked doors. They are sometimes referred to as "window exits.

Prior to the adoption of Amendment 25–76 (57 FR 19220, May 4, 1992), part 25 contained no specific standards for access to Type III exits; however, seat backs were not allowed to interfere with opening the exits, and that resulted inherently in an unobstructed passageway of about six to eight inches. Section 25.813 was amended by Amendment 25–76 to specifically require one of two optional access configurations for airplanes with 60 or more passengers:

1. An unobstructed passageway at least 10 inches wide for interior arrangements in which the adjacent seat rows on the exit side of the aisle contain no more than two seats. or 20 inches wide for interior arrangements in which those rows contain three seats. The width of the passageway is measured with adjacent seats adjusted to their most adverse position. (For the typical airline seating arrangement, "most adverse position" would be with the seatbacks of the row immediately ahead of the passageway in their most aft position. If the seats of the row immediately behind had any features that could be adjusted forward, such as retractable footrests, those features would have to be in their forwardmost position.) The centerline of the required passageway width must not be displaced more than 5 inches horizontally from that of the exit. (The term "required passageway" indicates that only a 10- or 20-inch portion of the passageway is considered in establishing the center line offset even if the passageway is wider than the required 10 or 20 inches.) These configurations are sometimes referred to informally as Configuration C with three-seat rows and Configuration G with two-seat rows (see Figure 1).

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