



Memorandum

Date: February 10, 2020

Subject: INFORMATION: Audit Announcement | Pilot Training Requirements
Project No. 20A3002A000
Federal Aviation Administration

From: Matthew E. Hampton 
Assistant Inspector General for Aviation Audits

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

On October 29, 2018, Lion Air Flight 610 crashed shortly after departing Jakarta, Indonesia, resulting in 189 fatalities. Five months later, on March 10, 2019, Ethiopian Air Flight 302 crashed shortly after departing Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, resulting in 157 fatalities, including 8 Americans. Although operated by foreign air carriers, both flights involved the Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft, which was certified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in March 2017.

These fatal accidents have drawn widespread attention to FAA's oversight and certification practices, including the Agency's process for establishing pilot training requirements for the aircraft. For example, at the time of the October 2018 fatal accident, pilots were reportedly unaware of the new automation system—known as the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS)—that Boeing included on the MAX aircraft to improve aircraft performance. According to the Lion Air accident report, the pilots' response to erroneous activations of MCAS was a contributing factor in the crash, raising international concerns about the role of pilot training.

In light of these concerns, the Chairmen and the Ranking Members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and its Subcommittee on Aviation requested that we review domestic and international pilot training standards related to commercial passenger aircraft, including the use of automation. Accordingly, our audit objectives will be to (1) evaluate FAA's process for establishing pilot training requirements for U.S. and foreign air carriers operating U.S.-certificated large passenger aircraft, and (2) review international civil aviation authorities' requirements for air carrier pilot training regarding the use of flight deck automation.

We plan to begin the audit later this month and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 366-1987, or Tina Nysted, Program Director, at (404) 562-3792.

cc: DOT Audit Liaison, M-1
FAA Audit Liaison, AAE-100