DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

Underwater Locating Devices (Acoustic) (Self-Powered)

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.


SUMMARY: This is a confirmation notice for the planned revocation of all TSO–C121 and TSO–C121a specifications. These actions are necessary because the planned issuance of TSO–C121b, Underwater Locating Devices (Acoustic) (Self-Powered), minimum performance standard (MPS) will increase the minimum operating life of Underwater Locating Devices from 30 days to 90 days.


SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On August 23, 2011, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) published a Notice in the Federal Register, Volume 76, page 52734, announcing the planned revocation of TSO–C121 and TSO–C121a authorizations and requested comments. The FAA proposed revising TSO–C121a to invoke the new SAE standard AS8045A which improves ULD performance, including increasing the battery operating life from 30 days to 90 days. When TSO–C121b is published, the FAA proposed withdrawing TSO–C121 and TSO–C121a authorizations no later than March 1, 2014. All Underwater Locating Devices (Acoustic) (Self-Powered) equipment manufacturers seeking TSO authorization would then need to obtain a new authorization to manufacture in accordance with TSO–C121b.

Comments

The FAA received four comments in response to the August 23, 2011, Federal Register Notice. The first comment, by Boeing Commercial Airplanes (Boeing), stated that the effective date of the planned withdrawal, March 1, 2014, appeared to have been calculated to provide two years between the publication date of the new TSO (approximately March 2012) and the withdrawal of the TSO authorizations. In order to allow orderly compliance, however, Boeing stated that industry needs the FAA to ensure at least three full years will be provided. Boeing stated that three years is the minimal time required for affected industry to address technical, business, and certification aspects of a new underwater locating device (ULD) before the existing devices can no longer be manufactured. Boeing urged the FAA to take into consideration the fact that there are multiple flight data recorder suppliers with varying procurement methods and contractual details that will be necessary to address. Additionally, Boeing noted that the new SAE performance standards referenced in proposed TSO–C121b include new testing requirements. Boeing commented that one ULD manufacturer has already indicated that its existing 90-day ULD will not meet the requirements of the new SAE specification called out in the TSO, and therefore, a complete re-design of the unit will be necessary. The FAA agrees with Boeing’s comments. TSO–C121b was published on February 28, 2012 and as such we have changed the withdrawal date to March 1, 2015. Boeing also stated that the effect of the planned TSO revocation would be to eliminate the manufacture of ULDs based on an older SAE Aerospace Standard that calls for a 30-day life, and requires the use of only ULDs based on a newer SAE standard that calls for a 90-day life. While Boeing recognized the current 14 CFR part 25 design regulations applicable to ULDs specified in 14 CFR 25.1457(g)(3) do not require a specific battery life, Boeing noted that the associated 14 CFR part 121 operating rules states in §121.359(c)(2)(iii), the aircraft have an “approved” underwater locating device. By revising the TSO to require different performance standards of the new SAE specification, Boeing argued that it appears the FAA may essentially be implementing a new operating requirement without rulemaking to precede it. Boeing asked the FAA to review this process and clarify the intent.

The FAA acknowledges this comment. The TSO process is one method to gain approval for an underwater locating device, but not the only method. The FAA notes that it is within its authority to revoke, or withdraw, previous TSO–C121 and
The SAE Minimum Performance
FAA will revise TSO–C121a to invoke
during an over-water accident
no additional burden is imposed, to
in the configuration control
30-day and 90-day ULD that is recorded
manufacturers currently produce both a
same. The FAA acknowledges that
comment. Regardless whether or a not a
warrant an extended search effort.
if a 90-day beacon was onboard to
for the 30-day beacon and what
perceptions this has for configuration
control for thousands of recorder part
which they will ship. L–3 stated this
would negatively impact their
customers.
The FAA acknowledges that shipping
regulations for hazardous material with
regard to lithium batteries will need to
be complied with.
L–3 Communications indicated its
concern with the FAA plan of attrition
for the 30-day beacon and what
repercussions this has for configuration
control for thousands of recorder part
numbers and the field reparability of
their beacons. Since it may take up to
6 years to replace a beacon battery, L–
3 estimated that there will be years of both 30-day and 90-day beacons in
service once the new TSO–C121b is in
effect and TSO–C121 and TSO–C121a
authorizations are revoked. In the event
of a crash, L–3 noted that there will be
unnecessary time required to determine
if a 90-day beacon was onboard to
warrant an extended search effort.
The FAA disagrees with this
comment. Regardless whether or a not a
planned retrofit program was invoked,
both pre and post TSO–C121b
configuration, control documentation
requirements and process remain the
same. The FAA acknowledges that
today’s action will introduce a mixed
ULD equipage across the fleet. However,
manufacturers currently produce both a
30-day and 90-day ULD that is recorded
in the configuration control
documentation. The FAA believes that
no additional burden is imposed, to
identify if a 30-day or a 90-day ULD is
installed on an aircraft for an operator
during an over-water accident
investigation.

Conclusion
Based on the comments received, the
FAA will revise TSO–C121a to invoke
the SAE Minimum Performance

Once TSO–C121b is published, the FAA
will revoke TSO–C121 and TSO–C121a
authorizations no later than March 1,
2015.

Issued in Washington, DC, on February 29,
2012.
Susan J. M. Cahler,
Assistant Manager, Aircraft Engineering
Division, Aircraft Certification Service.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
Bureau of the Public Debt

Proposed Collection: Comment Request

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of the
Treasury, as part of its continuing effort
to reduce paperwork and respondent
burden, invites the general public and
other Federal agencies to take this
opportunity to comment on proposed
and/or continuing information
collections, as required by the
Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995,
Public Law 104–13 (44 U.S.C.
3506(c)(2)(A)]. Currently the Bureau of
the Public Debt within the Department
of the Treasury is soliciting comments
concerning Application for Relief on
Account of Loss, Theft, or Destruction of
United States Savings and Retirement
Securities and Supplemental Statement
Concerning United States Securities.

DATES: Written comments should be
received on or before May 1, 2012 to be
assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments
to Bureau of the Public Debt, Bruce A.
Sharp, 200 Third Street A4–A,
Parkersburg, WV 26106–1328, or
bruce.sharp@bpd.treas.gov. The
opportunity to make comments online is
also available at www.pracomment.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Requests for additional information or
copies should be directed to Bruce A.
Sharp, Bureau of the Public Debt, 200
Third Street A4–A, Parkersburg, WV
26106–1328, (304) 480–8150.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:
Titles: Claim For Lost, Stolen or
Destroyed United States Savings and
Retirement Securities and Supplemental
Statement Concerning United States
Securities.

OMB Number: 1535–0013.

Form Number: PD F 1048 and PD F
2243.

Abstract: The information is requested to issue owners substitute

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For Distribution of United States
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For Distribution of United States