FAA Authorizes Boeing to Expand Modification Capabilities

The Federal Aviation Administration has awarded Boeing its approval to expand the types of airplane modifications it performs at its Modification Center in Wichita. The approval, known as a Supplemental Type Certificate, allows Boeing to convert 747-200 combis with stretched upper decks to full freighter capabilities. A combi is an airplane whose main deck is divided into two sections: one for passengers; the other for cargo.

The stretched-upper-deck 747 offers more room for passengers, but the extension also reduces the amount of cargo that can be carried. The modifications restore the cargo capacity, allowing a 747 stretched-upper-deck airplane to carry 243,000 pounds -- the same as on 747-200 freighters. The stretched upper deck design on the 747-200 was incorporated into production on the 747-300.

"The Supplemental Type Certificate means the Boeing Modification Center is authorized to modify 747 stretched upper decks," said Modification Responsibility Center Director Vic McMullen. "Earning this Supplemental Type Certificate for 747 stretched-upper-deck aircraft will enable Boeing to offer an even wider range of services to our customers."

The Modification Center recently completed work on its first 747 stretched-upper-deck conversion and is currently modifying another 747 stretched-upper-deck combi into full-freighter configuration.

In addition to offering full-service wide-bodied modifications and structural-durability updates, Boeing Wichita can also certify aircraft for increased takeoff weight and maximum zero-fuel weight operation, which is the unfueled weight of the aircraft plus the cargo.

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