FAA Certifies Boeing Next-Generation 737-700 Convertible

The Boeing Next-Generation 737-700C (Convertible) earned type certification from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on Aug. 31.

The 737-700C, capable of offering both all-passenger and all-cargo service, is the first new all-cargo 737 Boeing has developed since 1966, when the 737-200 Convertible was launched.

The certification recognizes that the 737-700C airplane has met all FAA airworthiness criteria and can be used as a transport. The interior passenger and cargo configurations will be certified separately later.

"We're especially excited to be offering airlines a cargo version of the technologically advanced Next-Generation 737 ," said Carolyn Corvi, Boeing 737 Programs vice president and general manager. "We view it as the perfect replacement airplane for some 500 aging Boeing 727 and early 737 freighters now in operation."

The 737-700C, a simple derivative of the Next-Generation 737-700 passenger airplane, has strengthened wings identical to those on the Boeing Business Jet (BBJ) The BBJ is a modified 737-700 that was certified by the FAA in October 1998. The 737-700C also has a new main-deck cargo door and a new cargo handling system.

The first customer for the 737-700C is the U.S. Naval Reserve, which designates the model as the C-40 Clipper. The Naval Reserve, scheduled to fly away its first C-40 in April 2001, plans to use the airplane to transport both cargo and personnel. The Navy has ordered five of the airplanes. A sixth airplane is budgeted for 2001.

Before the FAA certified the Next-Generation 737-700C, Boeing had to complete a three-and-a-half month flight-test program. The 737-700C embarked on its flight-test program April 14, 2000. Since then, two 737-700C flight-test airplanes have conducted 55 flights, 124 hours of ground testing and 131 hours of flight testing.

Part of the ground testing involved tests of the cargo door, which is new on the model. It also involved testing of airspeed calibration, testing of avionics to be used by the U.S. Navy in the C-40 version of the 737-700C and other testing associated with the all-cargo configuration.

The Next-Generation 737-700C can carry up to 149 passengers or up to 41,130 pounds (18,656 kilograms) of cargo. It can fly up to 3,215 nautical miles (5,954 kilometers) in a passenger layout and 2,875 nautical miles (5,324 kilometers) in a cargo layout.

The 737-700C is powered byCFM56-7 engines produced by CFMI, a joint venture of General Electric of the United States and Snecma of France.

The 737-700C is the fourth of the Next-Generation 737 models to be certified by the FAA. The 737-700, 737-800 and 737-600 have also been certified and are in service. A fifth Next-Generation 737 model, the 737-900, is scheduled for FAA certification next spring.

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