Boeing And Airbus Announce New International Specification For Bar Code Identification Of Parts

Boeing and Airbus yesterday completed the second of two co-hosted Global Aviation Bar Code Forums to educate suppliers and airlines about the benefits and requirements of using permanent bar code identification on parts installed on commercial airplanes.

At the first forum last month in Amsterdam and the second forum that ended yesterday in Chicago, both companies shared their progress and vision for permanent bar code identification on parts with airlines, aviation suppliers, third-party maintenance providers and military logistics interests.

During the past year Boeing informed approximately 500 suppliers about the technologies available for bar coding commercial airplane parts. Airline customers wanted to increase the efficiency of their parts tracking and asked the two manufacturers to implement bar coding on line-replaceable units (parts replaceable during airplane line maintenance) and life-limited parts. These parts typically are included in an airplane's readiness log -- a listing of serialized components that are on the airplane at time of delivery.

"Bar coding will improve airline configuration control by increasing the accuracy of the known 'as-delivered' configuration of the airplane," said Kenneth Porad, program manager of the Permanent Bar Code on Parts Identification Program at Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

"Bar coding also will help airlines reduce ownership costs by identifying rogue parts and minimizing airline inventories," he said. "And finally, it will improve the accuracy of information exchanged between the airline industry and suppliers to reduce the cycle time to solve service-related problems."

Boeing also announced today that industry guidelines for bar code parts identification co-developed with Airbus have achieved international technical specification status. Both companies had previously agreed to require the Air Transport Association's (ATA) SPEC 2000, Chapter 9, Permanent Bar Code ID on parts guidelines as a standard practice. Now, SPEC 2000 Chapter 9 will be known as International Standard Organization Technical Specification 21849, or ISO TS21849.

"This is significant because adopting ISO standards is the first preference for U.S. Department of Defense and NATO procurement agencies," Porad said. "Achieving international status supports our vision to deploy an ISO standard that meets the needs of both the commercial and military aviation industries around the world."

In a third announcement, Porad said Boeing will expand the scope of its permanent bar code identification program to include many more parts beyond those in the aircraft readiness log.

"We now intend to broaden the scope of the original program by applying it to airplane structural elements and shop-replaceable units," he said.

Like the original program, Porad said, the expanded program will be voluntary, meaning Boeing will continue to ask suppliers for their understanding and agreement in implementing permanent bar code identification on parts as a standard commercial practice.

"Although participation in the expanded program is not mandatory, by the end of 2002 we intend to work together with our suppliers to effectively integrate the permanent bar code ID program into their operations," Porad said.

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For further information:
Elizabeth Davis
(206) 544-9812