

Boeing Statement Relating to Recently Released Nov. 15, 2016 Instant Message

CHICAGO, October 20, 2019—We understand and regret the concern caused by the release Friday of a Nov. 15, 2016 instant message involving a former Boeing employee, Mark Forkner, a technical pilot involved in the development of training and manuals. And we especially regret the difficulties that the release of this document has presented for the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and other regulators.

It is unfortunate that this document, which was provided early this year to government investigators, could not be released in a manner that would have allowed for meaningful explanation. While we have not been able to speak to Mr. Forkner directly about his understanding of the document, he has stated through his attorney that his comments reflected a reaction to a simulator program that was not functioning properly, and that was still undergoing testing. We are continuing to investigate the circumstances of this exchange, and are committed to identifying all the available facts relating to it, and to sharing those facts with the appropriate investigating and regulatory authorities.

Boeing engaged in an extensive process with the FAA to determine pilot training requirements for the 737 MAX 8. This process was a complex, multiyear effort that involved a large number of individuals at both Boeing and the FAA. This effort itself was just a part of a much larger regulatory process for the design, development and certification of the 737 MAX 8.

In that regulatory process, Boeing informed the FAA about the expansion of the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS) to low speeds, including by briefing the FAA and international regulators on multiple occasions about MCAS's final configuration. The process also included evaluation of MCAS in low-speed configurations for both training and certification. The simulator software used during the Nov. 15 session was still undergoing testing and qualification and had not been finalized, but it, too, provided for MCAS operation at low speed. Separately, a low-speed version of MCAS was installed on the airplanes used for training-related flight testing that the FAA administered in August 2016. And FAA personnel also observed the operation of MCAS in its low-speed configuration during certification flight testing, beginning in August 2016 and continuing through January 2017.

We understand entirely the scrutiny this matter is receiving, and are committed to working with investigative authorities and the U.S. Congress as they continue their investigations.

We are deeply saddened and have been humbled by these accidents, and are fully committed to learning from them. We have developed improvements to the 737 MAX that will ensure that accidents like these can never happen again, and are committed to continuing to work closely with the FAA and global regulators to ensure the MAX's safe return to service.
