

Duckworth-Baldwin Emergency Vacation of Aircraft Cabin (EVAC) Act in Senate FAA Reauthorization

Overview

The modified Emergency Vacating of Aircraft Cabin (EVAC) Act in the Senate FAA reauthorization bill requires modernization and improvements to aircraft evacuation standards by requiring FAA to conduct a comprehensive study on aircraft evacuation and empanel a committee of experts and stakeholders – including representatives of the disability community, senior citizens and pediatricians -- to evaluate gaps in current evacuations standards and operating procedures and make recommendations. It requires FAA to initiate a rulemaking on any recommendations the FAA Administrator deems appropriate.

More Detailed Description

The study includes:

- prospective risk analysis, not just evaluation of past incidents
- recommendations for how to improve evacuation regulations and demonstrations to ensure they account for passengers with disabilities, including those who use wheelchairs or other mobility assistive devices
- research on risk posed by carry-on bags recommended by National Transportation Safety Board following [2016 evacuation incident at O'Hare Airport](#)
- whether each new generation of aircraft should be required to undergo full-scale in-person evacuation testing
- assessments of the following evacuation conditions:
 - presence of passengers of different ages, including infants, children and senior citizens
 - presence of passengers with disabilities
 - presence of passengers who have difficulty speaking or are non-verbal
 - presence of passengers who do not speak English
 - presence of carry-on luggage and personal items such as purse, briefcase or backpack
 - seat size and spacing
 - passenger load
 - presence of service animals

Upon completion of the study, the act requires FAA to empanel an expert committee to evaluate the study and make recommendations for an FAA rulemaking. The committee will include representatives from industry, labor, safety experts, disability community, senior citizens and pediatricians. The FAA Administrator is required to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking to implement such recommendations the Administrator deems appropriate.

The act also requires the FAA to report to Congress the findings of the study, the recommendations of the expert panel and the FAA Administrator's plan, if any, to implement such recommendations.