

Alaska Airlines' missing plane part found, FAA temporarily grounds B737 MAX 9s

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: The missing part of the Alaska Airlines' Boeing 737 MAX 9 that blew off mid-flight has been found in a backyard in Portland, announced the National Transportation Safety Board.

A Portland school teacher named Bob reached out to the agency after he found the missing Boeing 737 MAX 9 fuselage door plug in his yard, said NTSB Chair Jennifer Homendy at a news conference, according to reports.

Federal investigators had been searching for the door plug since it blew off an Alaska Airlines aircraft after taking off from Portland on January 5, leading to the nationwide grounding of certain Boeing 737 MAX 9 aircraft and a slew of flight cancellations. Homendy had explained locating the missing part would provide key clues as to why it separated from the airplane.

Federal investigators earlier had released their first image from inside the aircraft that was left with a refrigerator-sized hole mid-flight and it shows a headrest torn from a nearby seat and oxygen masks still hanging from the plane's ceiling.

No passengers during the January 5 flight were seated directly next to the section of the plane that blew off, added NTSB Chair Jennifer Homendy on January 6, as per reports. "It's fortunate that nobody died and there were not more serious injuries," Homendy said to the media after touring the aircraft. Investigators were preparing to interview the flight crew, she said.



**The missing fuselage door plug that blew off
Alaska Airlines' B737 MAX 9 mid-flight on January 5**

The refrigerator-sized hole that suddenly opened up on the aircraft

carrying 177 people from Portland, Oregon, to Ontario, California, on January 5 sent panic throughout the plane as the cabin depressurised, oxygen masks descended and passengers screamed and texted their goodbyes. The plane landed safely with no serious injuries reported, authorities said.

The ordeal resulted in the Federal Aviation Administration's decision to temporarily ground certain Boeing 737 MAX 9 aircraft until they are carefully inspected. Boeing has faced a string of setbacks in recent years, most notably a 2019 grounding in dozens of countries following two tragic crashes.

Alaska Airlines said on January 6 that emergency inspections of its fleet of Boeing 737 MAX 9 planes "will take more time," warning flight disruptions will likely continue. The number of Alaska Airlines cancellations has added up since the ordeal.

The airline said on January 6 afternoon that 160 flights — affecting roughly 23,000 travellers — had been cancelled. In a January 7 update, the airline said 170 flights that day had been cancelled and another 60 had been axed for January 8.

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