

Boeing starts flying 777X in path to certification

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 14 July, 2024



Virginia, USA: Boeing Co. has started conducting flight trials of its 777-9 aircraft with US regulators on board, achieving a milestone toward certifying its jumbo airliner after years of setbacks.

The company announced that it took the initial test flight late Friday with Federal Aviation Administration personnel. Achieving so-called Type Inspection Authorization marks the start of certification flight testing, a key step in one of the most extensive commercial test efforts that Boeing has ever undertaken.

"The certification flight test will continue validating the airplane's safety, reliability and performance," Boeing said in an emailed statement. "We appreciate our regulator's rigorous oversight."

Boeing warns customers of further delays on 737 Max amid crisis

Boeing delivers most aircraft since 737 Max blow-out in January
The FAA declined to comment on the certification effort, but noted that "safety always drives the timeline." "Generally this kind of thorough process takes many months," the regulator said in an emailed statement.

The accomplishment, which was first reported by the Air Current, reinforces confidence in Boeing's prediction that its hulking twin-engine jet is on track to enter the market in 2025 after years of delays. Boeing has logged around 480 orders for the 777-9, and two other planned models: the smaller 777-8 passenger jet and a freight-hauler.

Boeing's pilots have already racked up more than 3,500 flight hours over 1,200 test flights since the first 777X took to the air in January 2020. The planemaker has four dedicated aircraft that are being used to test every aspect of its safety and operations, ranging from stability and control to cabin noise.

Touted as a more-efficient replacement to Boeing's four-engine 737 jumbo jetliner and Airbus SE's A380, the 777X has been in development for more than a decade and was originally slated to enter the market in 2020. The delays have frustrated customers such as Emirates, Qatar Airways and Deutsche Lufthansa AG, forcing them to refurbish and continue flying aging jetliners they'd intended to replace.

The upgraded wide-body was caught up in the tougher regulatory scrutiny of Boeing's products that followed two fatal crashes of its 737 Max jets in 2018 and 2019 that combined killed 346 people. The FAA and European regulators demanded extensive testing and redesign of several 777X components, including a critical avionics system and actuator-control electronics.

The commercial entry of the final two Max models has also been delayed as the FAA required that the planemaker redo engineering studies and redesign an engine deicing system prone to failure in certain conditions.

-B