

US ungrounds Boeing 737 Max after 20 months of review

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: US regulators have officially ungrounded Boeing's 737 Max after a nearly two-year ban following two crashes which killed 346 people.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) signed an order confirming that Boeing's best-selling jet is technically cleared for commercial service following a safety review and number of updates to the aircraft that took 20 months to complete.

But individual airlines in the US must first gain approval from regulators before they can return their Max jets to service. Carriers in Middle Eastern countries will require their respective regulatory authorities to give their own approvals but most are expected to follow the FAA's lead.

The FAA on November 18 published an Airworthiness Directive specifying design changes that must be made before the aircraft returns to service in addition to updated MAX training requirements.

“The design and certification of this aircraft included an unprecedented level of

collaborative and independent reviews by aviation authorities around the world,” said FAA administrator Steve Dickson.

Those regulators have indicated that Boeing’s design changes, together with the changes to crew procedures and training enhancements, will give them the confidence to validate the aircraft as safe to fly in their respective countries and regions.

“Following the return to service, the FAA will continue to work closely with our foreign civil aviation partners to evaluate any potential additional enhancements for the aircraft.”

Boeing is now able to resume deliveries of the aircraft. The crisis is thought to have cost the manufacturer around USD 20 billion.

Stan Deal, President and Chief Executive, Boeing Commercial Airplanes, said, “We will continue to work with regulators around the world and our customers to return the airplane back into service worldwide.”

Boeing’s second largest Max customer is UAE budget airline flydubai, which will need approval from the General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) before it can begin operating the aircraft again.

The GCAA said in September it was working alongside the FAA to secure the Max’s safe return and had set up a special team to monitor US regulators’ progress.