

## **FAA Forms Committee to Study Portable Electronic Devices**



***Australian low-cost carrier Jetstar rents Apple iPads to passengers flying longer than two hours. The content includes movies, music, games and electronic books.***

The U.S. FAA has formed an aviation rulemaking committee (ARC) to make recommendations by next summer on safely allowing the use of portable electronic devices (PEDs) in flight. The committee will meet as in-flight entertainment and consumer electronics associations turn up the pressure to ease current restrictions on PEDs with new research on airline passenger demand.

The FAA said last August that it would form an ARC to study airline procedures governing the use of PEDs such as smartphones and tablet computers in flight. It has expressed particular concern about wireless devices that connect to the Internet using Wi-Fi, Bluetooth or cellular technologies. Such transmitting devices "can generate spurious signals at undesired frequencies," potentially interfering with communications and navigation radios on older aircraft and fly-by-wire controls and displays on newer aircraft, according to the agency. Current FAA regulations place the responsibility on the aircraft operator for determining which PEDs occupants may use on board, and during which phases of flight. The agency's guidance, followed by most airlines, allows for the broad use of non-transmitting PEDs such as electronic readers when an aircraft ascends above 10,000 feet. The Federal Communications Commission, a representative from which also serves on the ARC, bans the in-flight use of cellphones in the U.S.

The 25-member ARC is chaired by executives of the FAA and Delta Air Lines, and includes representatives of airlines, airframers, avionics manufacturers, trade associations and unions. According to its charter, the committee will submit a report to the FAA by July 31 containing recommendations on the technical, policy and procedural guidance that operators would need to "expand the use of various

types of PEDs throughout the entire flight."

A January 10 panel discussion at the International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas centered on the use of PEDs on aircraft. Moderator Jonathan Norris, representing the Airline Passenger Experience Association, said his organization and the Consumer Electronics Association have partnered to conduct research into consumer use of PEDs in flight. He said preliminary data reveals that nearly all U.S. airline passengers bring at least one PED on board with them, and that most consider it important to use the devices for personal or business travel.

Paul Misener, Amazon vice president for global public policy, said the online retailer has surveyed its customers about PED procedures in flight, and "they're frustrated." Misener serves on the ARC. The committee's challenge "is either making meaningful changes to the policy that exists today or explaining why meaningful change cannot be made," he said.

<http://www.ainonline.com/aviation-news/ain-air-transport-perspective/2013-01-28/faa-forms-committee-study-portable-electronic-devices>