

mum dimensions of a child safety seat that can be used on each aircraft operated by the air carrier to enable passengers to determine which child safety seats can be used on those aircraft.”

**§ 42301. Emergency contingency plans**

(a) **SUBMISSION OF AIR CARRIER AND AIRPORT PLANS.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this section, each of the following air carriers and airport operators shall submit to the Secretary of Transportation for review and approval an emergency contingency plan in accordance with the requirements of this section:

(1) An air carrier providing covered air transportation at a commercial airport.

(2) An operator of a commercial airport.

(3) An operator of an airport used by an air carrier described in paragraph (1) for diversions.

(b) **AIR CARRIER PLANS.**—

(1) **PLANS FOR INDIVIDUAL AIRPORTS.**—An air carrier shall submit an emergency contingency plan under subsection (a) for—

(A) each airport at which the carrier provides covered air transportation; and

(B) each airport at which the carrier has flights for which the carrier has primary responsibility for inventory control.

(2) **CONTENTS.**—An emergency contingency plan submitted by an air carrier for an airport under subsection (a) shall contain a description of how the carrier will—

(A) provide adequate food, potable water, restroom facilities, comfortable cabin temperatures, and access to medical treatment for passengers onboard an aircraft at the airport when the departure of a flight is delayed or the disembarkation of passengers is delayed;

(B) share facilities and make gates available at the airport in an emergency; and

(C) allow passengers to deplane following an excessive tarmac delay in accordance with paragraph (3).

(3) **DEPLANING FOLLOWING AN EXCESSIVE TARMAC DELAY.**—For purposes of paragraph (2)(C), an emergency contingency plan submitted by an air carrier under subsection (a) shall incorporate the following requirements:

(A) A passenger shall have the option to deplane an aircraft and return to the airport terminal when there is an excessive tarmac delay.

(B) The option described in subparagraph (A) shall be offered to a passenger even if a flight in covered air transportation is diverted to a commercial airport other than the originally scheduled airport.

(C) In providing the option described in subparagraph (A), the air carrier shall begin to return the aircraft to a suitable disembarkation point—

(i) in the case of a flight in interstate air transportation, not later than 3 hours after the main aircraft door is closed in preparation for departure; and

(ii) in the case of a flight in foreign air transportation, not later than 4 hours after the main aircraft door is closed in preparation for departure.

(D) Notwithstanding the requirements described in subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C), a passenger shall not have an option to deplane an aircraft and return to the airport terminal in the case of an excessive tarmac delay if—

(i) an air traffic controller with authority over the aircraft advises the pilot in command that permitting a passenger to deplane would significantly disrupt airport operations; or

(ii) the pilot in command determines that permitting a passenger to deplane would jeopardize passenger safety or security.

(c) **AIRPORT PLANS.**—An emergency contingency plan submitted by an airport operator under subsection (a) shall contain a description of how the operator, to the maximum extent practicable, will—

(1) provide for the deplanement of passengers following excessive tarmac delays;

(2) provide for the sharing of facilities and make gates available at the airport in an emergency; and

(3) provide a sterile area following excessive tarmac delays for passengers who have not yet cleared United States Customs and Border Protection.

(d) **UPDATES.**—

(1) **AIR CARRIERS.**—An air carrier shall update each emergency contingency plan submitted by the carrier under subsection (a) every 3 years and submit the update to the Secretary for review and approval.

(2) **AIRPORTS.**—An airport operator shall update each emergency contingency plan submitted by the operator under subsection (a) every 5 years and submit the update to the Secretary for review and approval.

(e) **APPROVAL.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 60 days after the date of the receipt of an emergency contingency plan submitted under subsection (a) or an update submitted under subsection (d), the Secretary shall review and approve or, if necessary, require modifications to the plan or update to ensure that the plan or update will effectively address emergencies and provide for the health and safety of passengers.

(2) **FAILURE TO APPROVE OR REQUIRE MODIFICATIONS.**—If the Secretary fails to approve or require modifications to a plan or update under paragraph (1) within the timeframe specified in that paragraph, the plan or update shall be deemed to be approved.

(3) **ADHERENCE REQUIRED.**—An air carrier or airport operator shall adhere to an emergency contingency plan of the carrier or operator approved under this section.

(f) **MINIMUM STANDARDS.**—The Secretary shall establish, as necessary or desirable, minimum standards for elements in an emergency contingency plan required to be submitted under this section.

(g) **PUBLIC ACCESS.**—An air carrier or airport operator required to submit an emergency contingency plan under this section shall ensure public access to the plan after its approval

under this section on the Internet Web site of the carrier or operator or by such other means as determined by the Secretary.

(h) **REPORTS.**—Not later than 30 days after any flight experiences an excessive tarmac delay, the air carrier responsible for such flight shall submit a written description of the incident and its resolution to the Aviation Consumer Protection Division of the Department of Transportation.

(i) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) **COMMERCIAL AIRPORT.**—The term “commercial airport” means a large hub, medium hub, small hub, or nonhub airport.

(2) **COVERED AIR TRANSPORTATION.**—The term “covered air transportation” means scheduled or public charter passenger air transportation provided by an air carrier that operates an aircraft that as originally designed has a passenger capacity of 30 or more seats.

(3) **TARMAC DELAY.**—The term “tarmac delay” means the period during which passengers are on board an aircraft on the tarmac—

(A) awaiting takeoff after the aircraft doors have been closed or after passengers have been boarded if the passengers have not been advised they are free to deplane; or

(B) awaiting deplaning after the aircraft has landed.

(4) **EXCESSIVE TARMAC DELAY.**—The term “excessive tarmac delay” means a tarmac delay of more than—

(A) 3 hours for a flight in interstate air transportation; or

(B) 4 hours for a flight in foreign air transportation.

(Added Pub. L. 112–95, title IV, §415(a), Feb. 14, 2012, 126 Stat. 93; amended Pub. L. 114–190, title II, §2308(a), (b), July 15, 2016, 130 Stat. 648.)

#### REFERENCES IN TEXT

The date of enactment of this section, referred to in subsec. (a), is the date of enactment of Pub. L. 112–95, which was approved Feb. 14, 2012.

#### AMENDMENTS

2016—Subsec. (b)(3)(C). Pub. L. 114–190, §2308(a)(2), added subpar. (C). Former subpar. (C) redesignated (D).

Subsec. (b)(3)(D). Pub. L. 114–190, §2308(a)(1), (3), redesignated subpar. (C) as (D) and substituted “subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C)” for “subparagraphs (A) and (B)” in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (i)(4). Pub. L. 114–190, §2308(b), amended par. (4) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “The term ‘excessive tarmac delay’ means a tarmac delay that lasts for a length of time, as determined by the Secretary.”

#### EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 112–95, title IV, §415(c), Feb. 14, 2012, 126 Stat. 96, provided that: “Except as otherwise provided, the requirements of chapter 423 of title 49, United States Code, as added by this section, shall begin to apply 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act [Feb. 14, 2012].”

#### REGULATIONS

Pub. L. 114–190, title II, §2308(c), July 15, 2016, 130 Stat. 648, provided that: “Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this section [July 15, 2016], the Secretary of Transportation shall issue regulations and

take other actions necessary to carry out the amendments made by this section [amending this section].”

#### § 42302. Consumer complaints

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Transportation shall establish a consumer complaints toll-free hotline telephone number for the use of passengers in air transportation (including transportation by air ambulance (as defined by the Secretary of Transportation)) and shall take actions to notify the public of—

(1) that telephone number; and

(2) the Internet Web site of the Aviation Consumer Protection Division of the Department of Transportation.

(b) **NOTICE TO PASSENGERS ON THE INTERNET.**—An air carrier or foreign air carrier providing scheduled air transportation using any aircraft that as originally designed has a passenger capacity of 30 or more passenger seats shall include on the Internet Web site of the carrier—

(1) the hotline telephone number established under subsection (a);

(2) the e-mail address, telephone number, and mailing address of the air carrier for the submission of complaints by passengers about air travel service problems; and

(3) the Internet Web site and mailing address of the Aviation Consumer Protection Division of the Department of Transportation for the submission of complaints by passengers about air travel service problems.

(c) **NOTICE TO PASSENGERS ON BOARDING DOCUMENTATION.**—Each air carrier and foreign air carrier shall include the hotline telephone number established under subsection (a) on—

(1) prominently displayed signs of the carrier at the airport ticket counters in the United States where the carrier operates; and

(2) any electronic confirmation of the purchase of a passenger ticket for air transportation issued by the carrier.

(d) **USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES.**—The Secretary shall periodically evaluate the benefits of using mobile phone applications or other widely used technologies to provide new means for air passengers to communicate complaints in addition to the telephone number established under subsection (a) and shall provide such new means as the Secretary determines appropriate.

(e) **AIR AMBULANCE PROVIDERS.**—Each air ambulance provider shall include the hotline telephone number, link to the Internet website established under subsection (a), and contact information for the Aviation Consumer Advocate established under section 425<sup>1</sup> on—

(1) any invoice, bill, or other communication provided to a passenger or customer of the provider; and

(2) its Internet Web site, and any related mobile device application.

(Added Pub. L. 112–95, title IV, §415(a), Feb. 14, 2012, 126 Stat. 95; amended Pub. L. 115–254, div. B, title IV, §§405, 419(a), 423(a), Oct. 5, 2018, 132 Stat. 3329, 3336, 3337.)

#### REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 425, referred to in subsec. (e), is probably a reference to section 425 of Pub. L. 115–254 but should be

<sup>1</sup> See References in Text note below.