NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N 8900.464

National Policy

Effective Date:
4/25/18

Cancellation Date:
4/25/19

SUBJ: OpSpec/MSpec/LOA A002, Definitions and Abbreviations

1. Purpose of This Notice. This notice announces changes to definitions contained in operations specification (OpSpec)/management specification (MSpec)/letter of authorization (LOA) A002 and directs revision of the A002 templates for affected Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) operations: parts 91 subpart K (part 91K), 121, 125 (including part 125 Letter of Deviation Authority (A125 LODA) holders), and 135. The change adds a definition for "cargo" in support of an air cargo safety initiative and aligns the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) definition with the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) definition.

2. Audience. The primary audience for this notice is FAA certificate-holding district offices (CHDO) and principal inspectors (PI) assigned oversight of operators conducting operations under parts 91K, 121, 125 (including A125 LODA holders), and 135. The secondary audience includes all Flight Standards divisions, branches, and offices.

3. Where You Can Find This Notice. You can find this notice on the MyFAA employee website at https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices. Inspectors can access this notice through the Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS) at http://fsims.avs.faa.gov. Operators can find this notice on the FAA's website at http://fsims.faa.gov. This notice is available to the public at http://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/orders_notices.

4. Background. The term "cargo" is not defined in a universal manner within FAA publications. The terms "cargo," "freight," and "payload" are used interchangeably. The current editions of Advisory Circular (AC) 120-27, Aircraft Weight and Balance Control, and AC 120-85, Air Cargo Operations, define cargo only as used in each respective AC. To standardize the term "cargo" and align the FAA definition with the ICAO definition found in ICAO Annex 9, Facilitation, the FAA will add the term cargo to OpSpec/MSpec/LOA A002. Mail, baggage, and stores (i.e., Company Material (COMAT)) are stored in the cargo compartments of aircraft and the term cargo was applied to all items located in these compartments. This misapplication of the term cargo led to differing authorizations and expectations within the FAA and aviation industry.

5. Guidance.

a. Explanation of Changes.

(1) Cargo Definition. The following definition is added to A002: "Cargo: Any property carried on an aircraft other than mail, stores, and accompanied or mishandled baggage."

(2) Affected OpSpec/MSpec/LOA Templates. The following OpSpec/MSpec/LOA A002 templates will be updated with the definition identified above:

- MSpec A002 for part 91K.
- OpSpec A002 for part 121.
- OpSpec A002 for part 121/135.
- OpSpec A002 for part 125.
- OpSpec A002 for part 135.
- LOA A002 for part 125 (including A125 LODA holders).

b. Documentation. Regardless of the terms used to identify items carried on the aircraft, the operator must account for them in the Weight and Balance (W&B) documentation prior to flight. Operators must load all items in conformance with approved procedures.

(1) Mail is defined as a separate term because it is carried in accordance with Title 39 of the United States Code (39 U.S.C.) chapter 54 and Title 49 U.S.C. chapter 419, which conform to the Universal Postal Union (UPU) Convention.

(a) The W&B calculations must use actual weights for mail shipments.

(b) Operators must secure all mail in accordance with approved procedures.

(c) Mail may also require special cargo securing procedures. The definition of "special cargo" is found in OpSpec/MSpec/LOA A002, and further information on special cargo is found in AC 120-85.

(2) Baggage is a separate classification due to differences in the way an operator can choose to calculate the weight, as authorized in OpSpecs. The operator may use:

- Actual weights, and/or
- Survey weights/standard weights as defined in AC 120-27.

Note: Baggage and mail do not require aircraft authorization for cargo in OpSpec A003, Aircraft Authorization, and are carried in the appropriate cargo area in the aircraft. Generally, these items are loaded in a bulk compartment, but depending on the aircraft, approved configuration loading in an approved unit load device (ULD) is also authorized.

(3) Stores, also known as COMAT, do not require cargo authorization in A003.

(a) Operators carrying COMAT must have procedures which control the type and quantity of COMAT carried.

(b) Some COMAT requires special procedures that are similar to special cargo, and operators must have procedures to safely carry these items.

(c) Consider the aircraft limitations, such as floor-loading and running loads for dense COMAT transport.

(d) W&B control manuals must have processes and procedures incorporated in the manual for safe transportation of COMAT.

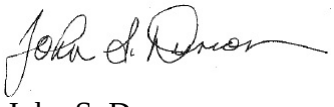
(e) The W&B calculations must use actual weights for COMAT.

(4) All other items would require the aircraft authorization for passenger/cargo or cargo-only when carried. Cargo is always calculated as actual weights for W&B calculations.

(5) Certificate Management Teams (CMT) should encourage their operators to adopt this standardized definition of cargo during updates to manuals.

6. Action. Inspectors should alert operators to whom they have issued A002 to the changes announced by this notice. This is a nonmandatory change to A002. However, inspectors should reissue A002 to affected operators as soon as practical.

7. Disposition. We will incorporate the information in this notice into FAA Order 8900.1 before this notice expires. Direct questions concerning the information in this notice to the Air Transportation Division (AFS-200) at 202-267-8166.



John S. Duncan
Executive Director, Flight Standards Service