



# UAE airlines not affected by Boeing 737 Max 9 grounding after Alaska Airlines incident

► Flydubai, a major operator of the aircraft type, said its three jets are unaffected by the directive issued by the US Federal Aviation Administration



A Boeing 737 Max 9 aircraft. The 737 is Boeing's most popular aircraft and its best-selling jet. AP



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The [General Civil Aviation Authority](#) has said that no UAE airline operating the Boeing 737 Max 9 aircraft has been affected by a technical malfunction of one of the jets in the US on Friday.

US officials ordered the immediate grounding of some Boeing 737 Max 9 aircraft after an Alaska Airlines plane was forced to make an emergency landing when a window panel blew out after take-off, leaving a gaping hole in the side of the fuselage.

"None of the national airlines in the UAE are operating any of [the Boeing 737 Max 9](#) aircraft, affected by the technical malfunction," the civil aviation body said on Sunday, Wam reported.

[Dubai's low-cost airline, flydubai](#), a major operator of the 737 Max aircraft, said its three 737 9 Max jets are unaffected by the directive issued by the US [Federal Aviation Administration](#).

"Flydubai operates Boeing 737 Max 9 aircraft with a deactivated mid-aft exit door configuration which is not referenced in the directive," a flydubai representative told *The National*.

The Emergency Airworthiness Directive issued by the US regulatory

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The Emergency Airworthiness Directive issued by the US regulatory body requires operators to inspect affected aircraft before further flight.

"The required inspections will take around four to eight hours per aircraft," the FAA said on Friday.

On Saturday, the FAA ordered the temporary grounding of 171 Boeing jets installed with the same panel.

"They will remain grounded until the FAA is satisfied that they are safe," the body said.

"Safety will continue to drive our decision-making as we assist the NTSB's [National Transportation Safety Board] investigation into Alaska Airlines Flight 1282," FAA administrator Mike Whitaker said.

Customers for Boeing's 737 Max model include flydubai, Southwest, United, American Airlines, Ryanair, Air Canada, Turkish Airlines and some Chinese airlines.

Regulators around the world say they are "closely monitoring" the situation.

There were 177 people on board the Alaska Airlines plane, which made an emergency landing when a window panel blew out after take-off on Friday. The plane had departed from Portland International Airport in Oregon. The cabin crew reported a pressurisation issue and the flight returned to the ground after 20 minutes.



A panel used to plug an area reserved for an exit door on the Boeing 737 Max 9 jetliner blew out shortly after the flight took off from Portland, Oregon. AP

The latest incident happened a week after Boeing urged airlines to inspect 737 Max aircraft for a possible loose bolt in the rudder control system, according to the FAA.

Analysts at the time said they did not expect any order cancellations for the Max.

"That is because Boeing will stand by the Max and ensure everything gets fixed," Addison Schonland,

partner as US-based AirInsight, told *The National*.

"The impact on Boeing is less a financial hit unless the problem is found on lots of aircraft and Boeing will have to compensate with repair costs. Possibly even inspection costs, too. But the size of this impact is not clear at all for now."

The 737 is Boeing's most popular aircraft. The Alaska Airlines incident is the latest issue to affect the company's best-selling jet, which was grounded for two years, in March 2019, after a defect in its flight stabilising system was involved in two fatal crashes.

In October, Boeing cut its 737 delivery target for this year, citing production quality problems at its biggest supplier Spirit AeroSystems, which makes fuselages for the narrow-body jets.

The Arlington, Virginia-based company now expects to deliver 375 to 400 of its 737 aircraft this year, down from a target of 400 to 450 jets, as a result of the repair work required.

Boeing expects to complete the transition to producing 38 of the 737 jets per month by the end of the year, with plans to increase to 50 per month in the 2025-2026 time frame, it said in October.

The company reported a net loss of \$1.6 billion in the third quarter on the back of higher costs at its defence unit and fewer deliveries of its 737 aircraft due to supplier problems, marking its ninth consecutive money-losing quarter.

Boeing narrowed its losses from \$3.3 billion in the same quarter last year.

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