FAA Process for MINIMUM EQUIPMENT LISTS (MEL) AND CONFIGURATION DEVIATION LISTS (CDL)

Section 6 Master Minimum Equipment List Development and Approval Process for 14 CFR Parts 121, 135, and 129 Operators

4-776 GENERAL. This section contains information for aviation safety inspectors (ASI) concerning the development, approval, and revision process of Master Minimum Equipment Lists (MMEL).

4-777 PROPOSED MASTER MINIMUM EQUIPMENT LIST (PMMEL). The first requirement for producing an initial MMEL is the development of a PMMEL that reflects the manufacturer's concepts of which items can be inoperative. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) encourages the aircraft manufacturer to develop a PMMEL during the aircraft certification process. The aircraft manufacturer coordinates with the Aircraft Evaluation Group (AEG) and the aircraft operators throughout the PMMEL development process. Manufacturers and operators seeking consideration for relief for operating with certain items of equipment inoperative must provide supporting documentation that sufficiently substantiates their requests. In addition to including an evaluation of the potential outcome of operating with items that are inoperative, this documentation should consider the subsequent failure of the next critical component, the interrelationships between items that are inoperative, the impact on Approved Flight Manual (AFM) procedures, and the increase in crew workload. The PMMEL must not conflict with the AFM limitations, Configuration Maintenance Procedures (CMP), or Airworthiness Directives (AD). The PMMEL should specify suitable limitations in the form of placards, maintenance procedures, crew operating procedures, and other restrictions as necessary to ensure an acceptable level of safety. To substantiate these considerations, the manufacturer must provide demonstrations that include evaluation flights as necessary. Schedule AEG participation or observation in participation flights, if needed, in conjunction with the certification test program or the Flight Standardization Board's (FSB) operational evaluation, whenever possible. The manufacturer develops the PMMEL in a format acceptable to the Administrator and submits it to the AEG for review.

4-778 INITIAL MMEL APPROVAL PROCESS. To initiate the MMEL approval process, the AEG schedules Flight Operations Evaluation Board (FOEB) meetings to review and evaluate the PMMEL for technical accuracy and acceptability. The AEG invites interested parties, such as the manufacturer, operators, and interested aviation community representatives, to participate in these meetings. The FOEB discusses each PMMEL item with the interested participants and recommends approval, modification, or disapproval for each item. If they cannot reach a consensus, they may hold an item open for further consideration or until they gather more information. The manufacturer or operator must resubmit, with additional justification, items not acceptable or held open by the FOEB. The PMMEL is the initial manufacturer and the operators use the AEG working document to develop the draft MMEL and establish the working relationship between the initial operators and the FOEB chairman. The FOEB chairman arranges to have the draft MMEL posted on the MMEL Web site, www.opspecs.com for operator and industry review and receives comments within the indicated time period. (For access to this Web site, contact the Technical Programs Branch, AFS–260, at (202) 267–8166.) The FOEB will review and discuss the recommendations and comments and revise the draft MMEL as necessary. After the FOEB properly completes the coordination of the draft MMEL with field and industry, the Air Transportation Division, AFS–200, Washington Headquarters, will post the approved MMEL on the MMEL Web site for access by industry for preparing individual operator MELs.

4-779 MMEL REVISION PROCEDURES. While the district office level approves an MEL, the appropriate AEG reviews and approves an MMEL revision. An individual operator, the FAA, or industry may request

changes to an MMEL. The AEG will consider those items requested by users based on operational considerations that indicate needed relief. Submit proposed changes generated by an operator through the principal operations inspector (POI) when the need becomes apparent. The POI forwards the proposed changes, with recommendations, to the appropriate AEG for consideration at the next scheduled FOEB meeting or electronic FOEB via the MMEL Web site. Volume 4, Chapter 4, Section 4 contains a description of the types of MMEL revisions. Revisions to the MMELs receive approval in the same manner as initial MMELs; that is, after the completion of the proper coordination, AFS–200 will post the revision on the MMEL Web site, www.opspecs.com for industry to use to revise their individual MELs.

4-780 LEAD AIRLINE CONCEPT.

A. Designated. For certain air carrier airplanes, industry will designate an air carrier representative as Lead Airline representative to coordinate with the aircraft manufacturer, other operators, and the FOEB chairman. The purpose of the Lead Airline representative is to expedite the FOEB process and MMEL revision for the affected airplane. The Lead Airline representative will conduct coordination meetings, as required, and will develop the FOEB agenda in a manner acceptable to the FOEB chairman. The Lead Airline representative will also coordinate industry participation at the FOEB meeting and will assist the manufacturer and the FOEB chairman in finalizing the MMEL revision after the meeting.

B. Required Revision or Optional Revision. When issued a required or optional revision, operators should consider the following:

1) The MMEL revision tracking policy applies only to MMEL changes that are more restrictive than presently published in the operator's MEL. That is, if the MMEL change provides greater relief than the operator's MEL, there is no need for the operator to make any change to his/her MEL.

2) Submit MMEL changes that are more restrictive than the operator's MEL to the POI within 90 days of the MMEL revision date unless the operator and the POI agree that extenuating circumstances preclude adoption of the specific MMEL item. The POI may authorize additional time, but you must complete the MEL approval in 180 days.

3) One reason that an operator might delay adopting a revised MMEL item is the time lag between an MMEL revision and publication of the airframe manufacturers recommended MEL procedures. In such cases, the operator incorporates the MMEL changes that are more restrictive than in his/her MEL, except any that require manufacturer recommended procedures. In this case, the operator will advise the POI and, if deemed necessary, the POI will consult with the AEG to determine a reasonable target date for the operator to incorporate and publish the MMEL change.

4) In the case of a required revision, if the revision is not applicable to the operator, he/she should advise the POI of this fact and reissue the MEL Control Page to indicate that the MEL is in compliance with the required MMEL revision. An optional revision does not require an operator action.

Figure 4-47, Sample OpSpec D095

SAMPLE

D095. Minimum Equipment List (MEL) Authorization

The certificate holder is authorized to use an approved Minimum Equipment List (MEL) provided the conditions and limitations of this paragraph are met. The certificate holder shall not use an MEL for any aircraft that is not specifically authorized by this paragraph.

a. Authorized Aircraft. The certificate holder is authorized to use an approved MEL for the aircraft listed below provided the conditions and limitations of this paragraph are met:

Aircraft M/M/S
TABL01

b. Maximum Times Between Deferral and Repair. Except as provided in subparagraph d, the certificate holder shall have items repaired within the time intervals specified for the categories of items listed below:

(1) Category A. Items in this category shall be repaired within the time interval specified in the remarks column of the certificate holder's approved MEL.

(2) Category B. Items in this category shall be repaired within 3 consecutive calendar days (72 hours) excluding the calendar day the malfunction was recorded in the aircraft maintenance log and/or record.

(3) Category C. Items in this category shall be repaired within 10 consecutive calendar days (240 hours) excluding the calendar day the malfunction was recorded in the aircraft maintenance log and/or record.

(4) Category D. Items in this category shall be repaired within one hundred and twenty (120) consecutive calendar days (2,880 hours), excluding the day the malfunction was recorded in the aircraft maintenance log and/or record.

c. MEL Management Program. The certificate holder shall develop and maintain a comprehensive program for managing the repair of items listed in the approved MEL. The certificate holder shall include in a document or its manual a description of the MEL management program. The MEL management program must include at least the following provisions:

(1) A method which provides for tracking the date and when appropriate, the time an item was deferred and subsequently repaired. The method must include a supervisory review of the number of deferred items per aircraft and a supervisory review of each deferred item to determine the reason for any delay in repair, length of delay, and the estimated date the item will be repaired.

(2) A plan for bringing together parts, maintenance personnel, and aircraft at a specific time and place for repair.

(3) A review of items deferred because of the unavailability of parts to ensure that a valid back order exists with a firm delivery date.

(4) A description of specific duties and responsibilities by the job title of personnel who manage the MEL management program.

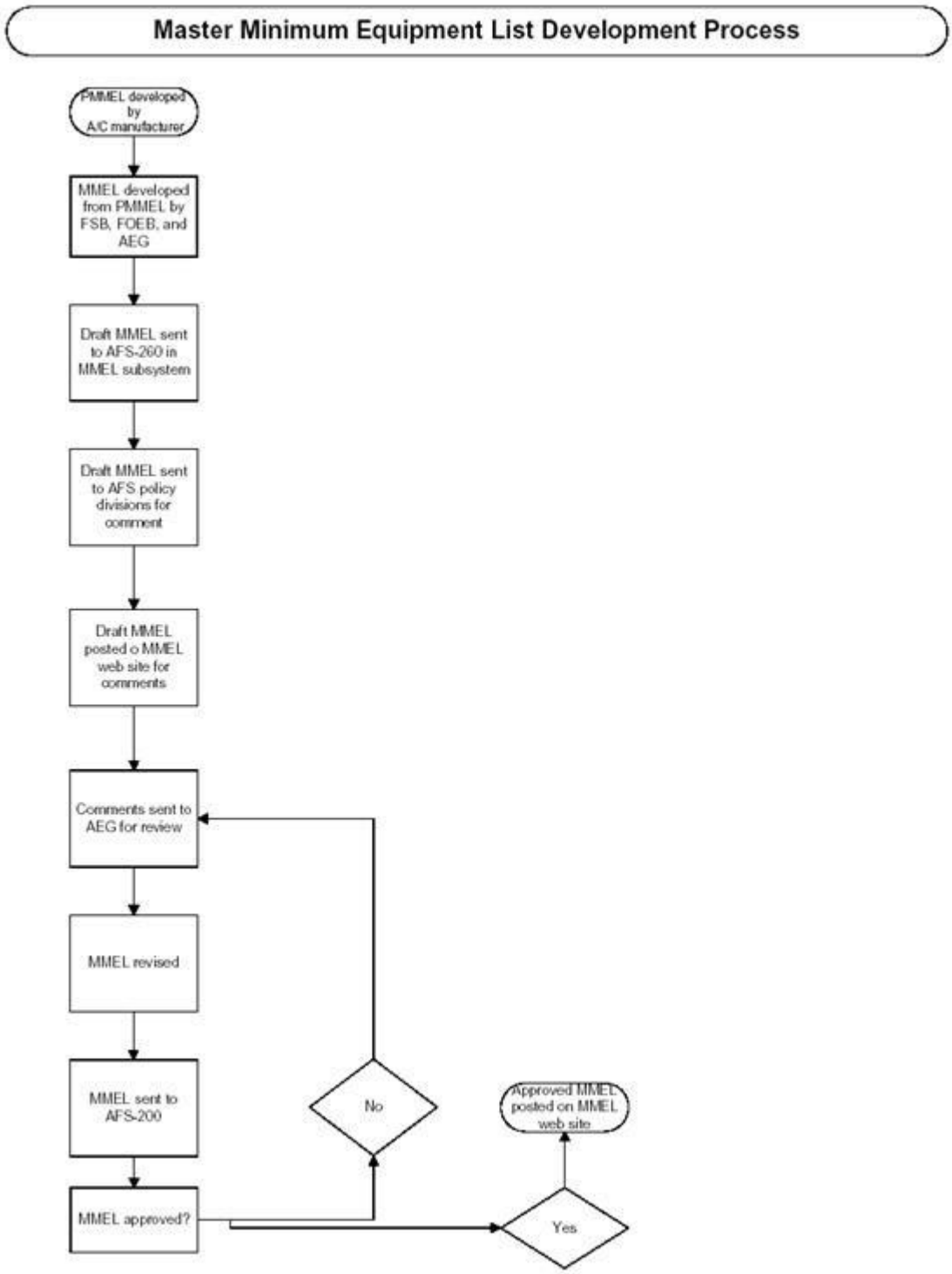
(5) Procedures for controlling extensions to specified maximum repair intervals as permitted by **subparagraph d,** to include the limit of the extension, and the procedures to be used for authorizing extensions.

d. The certificate holder is authorized to use a continuing authorization to approve extensions to the maximum repair interval for category B and C items as specified in the approved MEL provided the responsible Flight Standards District Office is notified within 24 hours of any extension approval.

The certificate holder is not authorized to approve any extensions to the maximum repair interval for category A items or category D items as specified in the approved MEL. The Flight Standards District Office may deny the use of the continuing authorization if abuse is evident.

TEXT99

Figure 4-48, Master Minimum Equipment List Development Process



(1) Proposed Master Minimum Equipment List (PMMEL) is developed for new aircraft by the aircraft manufacturer. The PMMEL is not a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) product and may not be used in Air Transportation operations.

(2) Master Minimum Equipment Lists (MMEL) are developed for new aircraft and existing aircraft for which an MMEL has never been developed. The documents are produced by an external process involving the Flight Standardization Board (FSB), Flight Operations Evaluation Board (FOEB) and Aircraft Evaluation Group (AEG) for the specific aircraft. The proposed MMEL is forwarded to AFS–200 for comments and processing.

(3) The draft MMEL is sent to AFS–260 in the computerized MMEL Subsystem.

(4) The document is then sent to the responsible policy division within Flight Standards Service (AFS) for review and comment.

(5) The draft MMEL is posted on the operations specifications (OpSpecs) Web site for comment from interested parties both inside and outside the FAA.

(6) Comments received are collected and sent back to the responsible AEG.

(7) The AEG reviews the comments, makes changes as necessary and creates a proposed MMEL.

(8) The proposed MMEL is sent back to AFS–200 for review and approval.

(9) If the MMEL is acceptable it is approved; or, if not, it is sent back to the AEG with comments for further review and revisions.

(10) Once the MMEL is approved, it is electronically processed and posted on the OpSpecs Web site for download and use.

(11) The process is then complete.