

CertAlert

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Issued January 21, 2004

Number SO-04-04

To: All 14 CFR part 139 Southern Region airports

Passengers And Crew On Cargo Aircraft

A recent aircraft accident in the Southern Region has demonstrated a potential problem with determining the passenger and crew loading on cargo aircraft.

The incident aircraft was a cargo MD-10 (old DC-10). At the time of this incident, the ARFF crew at the airport assumed that the cargo MD-10 would have no more than 3 crew members aboard, total. When the incident occurred, it became a no notice Alert 3, without time for Air Traffic (ATCT) personnel to request the routine Alert information including "souls on board."

Arriving ARFF units were surprised to see 7 personnel egress the aircraft. After action briefing with the cargo operator revealed that on their MD-10 aircraft, there could be as many as 27 personnel on board, at any time.

The accident revealed that there might be situations where far more personnel than expected could be aboard a cargo aircraft. If this event were to occur at a time when the crew was unable to advise ARFF of the total personnel on board, some passengers could be trapped based on an assumption of expected and limited crew.

The FAA Southern Region Airport Certification Safety Inspectors suggest that airport operators and/or ARFF crews, contact their cargo operators and explore avenues to determine the number of personnel that could possibly be expected on a particular aircraft. If possible, pre-plan with cargo operations for a way to obtain personnel manifests for incoming flights, or at the minimum, expect that there could be a far greater number of personnel aboard than expected.

FAA Southern Region Airport Certification Safety Inspectors