

# G550 will require evac crewmember

by Kirby J. Harrison

August 4, 2008, 7:29 AM

Gulfstream, which has been engaged in a dispute with the FAA over whether its new Gulfstream 550 could be certified with the traditional four elliptical window emergency exits, has now apparently satisfied the agency's concerns in the form of a requirement for "an evacuation crewmember" on all flights carrying 10 or more passengers.

The ultra-long-range business jet received provisional certification on December 11, subjecting the derivative aircraft to a number of limitations that were expected to be removed before the start of green deliveries this month. According to Gulfstream, the matter of the emergency exits was not related to those limitations. Rather, said a spokesman, "The resolution was an Equivalent Safety Finding, granted by the FAA prior to the issuance of the PTC [primary type certificate], in compliance with the latest regulatory amendments."

The G550 was designed to be certified with the same four Type IV elliptical window emergency exits as those on the earlier Gulfstream V, of which the G550 is a derivative. At the time the GV was certified in 1997, the four emergency exits were considered by the FAA to be equivalent to two larger Type III exits, and Gulfstream anticipated little difficulty in certifying the system in the G550.

The FAA, however, asked Gulfstream to redesign the G550's emergency exit system to include the requirement for a Type III exit.

Instead, Gulfstream presented an alternative—a requirement for what it describes as an "evacuation crewmember" for any flight carrying 10 or more passengers. This can be a trained flight attendant, or it can be a passenger who has completed the required evacuation crewmember training. It cannot be the pilot or copilot.

According to the manual in its tentative form, "An additional crewmember will be trained in evacuation on all flights with 10 to 19 passengers." It goes on to say that this crewmember must be "trained in the optimum method for evacuating exits and procedures for directing passenger flow to prevent someone who does not fit through an elliptical window from blocking it so that others cannot use it."

The Type IV elliptical window exits are 19 inches high by 26 inches wide. The four-window emergency exit configuration, established on the Gulfstream fleet since the 1950s, said a spokesman, "has been validated by passengers exiting the aircraft without injury." The Type III exit as described by FAR 25.807, is required to be 36 inches high by 20 inches wide, with a corner radius not greater than seven inches.

Gulfstream has an agreement with FlightSafety International for the training of pilots and flight attendants as part of the contract for purchase of a Gulfstream business jet. The training includes emergency egress through window exits of a Gulfstream fuselage mockup. A Gulfstream spokesman said the agreement with FlightSafety would not preclude evacuation crewmember-specific training by other companies.

However, the operating manual, still to be approved by the FAA, requires that each evacuation crewmember perform "at least the following emergency drills using a representative Gulfstream airplane or Gulfstream cabin mockup training device."

- Ditching, if applicable.
- Emergency evacuation. This includes opening and egressing through a representative Gulfstream elliptical exit and conduct of an emergency evacuation drill to demonstrate directing of passenger flow per FAA-approved Gulfstream Document.

- Operation and use of Gulfstream elliptical window exits.

Crew training companies not equipped with a mockup fuselage with the Gulfstream windows meeting the training requirements would be forced to make use of the client's aircraft or an equivalent Gulfstream with elliptical window exits.

The evacuation crewmember-specific training, according to Gulfstream, will require "as little as one day."

Gulfstream claims the requirement will not ruffle feathers among potential Gulfstream customers "because most high-density passenger flights usually have fully qualified cabin attendants on board." In fact, said the company, "This path was supported by feedback received from our customers as well as training organizations that appreciate the effectiveness of the Gulfstream design."

In cases where an evacuation crewmember is required, said a spokesman, "Gulfstream has developed a program for training to meet this requirement which will have minimal impact on any operator."

Gulfstream describes the requirement as that of an evacuation crewmember. But the Initial and Recurrent Evacuation Crewmember Testing Requirements and Evacuation Crewmember Training in the proposed operating manual are essentially the same as those in Part 135 for a trained flight attendant.

AIRCRAFT    SAFETY

<https://www.ainonline.com/aviation-news/aviation-international-news/2008-08-04/g550-will-require-evac-crewmember>

---