

Boeing Faces Class-Action Lawsuit After Emergency Landing



Last week, passengers from an Alaska Airlines Inc. flight that made an emergency landing in Portland, Oregon, filed a class-action lawsuit against Boeing Co., the manufacturer of the 737 Max 9 jet involved in the incident. The emergency landing was prompted by a mid-air blowout of a "door plug," according to the complaint filed in a Washington state court on Thursday.

Allegations and Damages

The lawsuit, seeking class-action status and unspecified damages, was brought by seven passengers who claim that the 171 passengers and six crew on Alaska Airlines Flight 1282 suffered physical injuries and emotional trauma during the emergency on January 5. The complaint describes the harrowing experience, stating that the pressure change caused bleeding ears, coupled with low oxygen, loud wind noise, and traumatic stress, resulting in severe headaches for the passengers.

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"The passengers were shocked, terrorized, and confused, thrust into a waking nightmare, hoping they would live long enough to walk the earth again," the suit asserts.

Regulatory Scrutiny

The incident has prompted a formal investigation into Boeing's aircraft operations by US regulators. The company's Chief Executive Officer, Dave Calhoun, acknowledged that a "quality escape" compromised the safety of the 737 Max 9 jet. However, Boeing is still working to understand what went wrong. As of now, Boeing has refrained from commenting on the lawsuit.

Timeline and Inspection Findings

Alaska Airlines took delivery of the Max 9 jet from Boeing around November 11, as per the complaint. Subsequent inspections revealed loose bolts securing door plugs on similar Max 9 planes owned by Alaska Airlines and United Airlines.

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In-Flight Emergency Details

Passengers on Flight 1282 reported a sudden loud explosive noise before the left door plug shot off the aircraft, causing a violent depressurization of the cabin. The force of the depressurization resulted in significant damage, including tearing off and expelling pieces of seats into the night. Oxygen masks fell from the ceiling, but many seemed to be nonfunctional.

The passengers claim that the emergency response was further impaired by wind noise from the hole in the plane and shouting among panicked passengers. Some passengers feared they would not survive the flight, leading to prayers, text messages expressing trepidation to family members, and individuals clinging to one another for support.

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