Auxiliary Battery Device Event

UA2664  |  07FEB2023  |  SAN-EWR
N77259  |  Boeing 737 MAX 8

• Approximately 3–5 minutes after takeoff from SAN, a customer's auxiliary battery device caught fire in the first-class cabin.
• Cabin crew immediately fell into their prescribed roles based on their firefighting procedures.
• Dense black smoke filled the entire first-class cabin.
• Device fire was contained utilizing a water fire extinguisher, followed by halon.
• Two thermal containment bags were used (one from the flight deck and one from the cabin).
• All four cabin crew were hospitalized for smoke inhalation.

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Background
- Customer’s auxiliary battery device was unplugged and had no devices connected.
- Dense black smoke made firefighting by cabin crew extremely difficult.
- Cabin crew had difficulty opening the thermal containment bag and breaking the seal holding the gloves.
- Bulky fire gloves made picking up the device difficult.
- Cabin crew did not feel they had enough time to don protective breathing equipment resulting in smoke inhalation.

Hazards / Root Cause
- Recommendation to the thermal containment bag manufacturer for separation of the gloves.
- Review of thermal containment bag better dexterity.
- Incorrect boarded in the cabin, resulting in a fleet campaign to check all aircraft.
- Recommendation for photoluminescent emergency equipment placards was hard to locate in dense smoke.
Lessons Learned

- Recommendation to the thermal containment bag manufacturer for smaller seal for easier separation of the gloves
- Review of thermal containment bag gloves for better dexterity
- Incorrect thermal containment bag was boarded in the cabin, resulting in a fleet campaign to check all aircraft
- Recommendation for photoluminescent emergency equipment placards as equipment was hard to locate in dense smoke
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