

Boeing adopts 'business as usual' posture at 737 media tour

March 28 2019, by Luc Olinga



Employees work on Boeing 737 MAX airplanes at the factory in Renton, Washington

After two fatal crashes in five months, Boeing is trying hard—very hard—to present itself as unfazed by the crisis that surrounds the

company.

The company's sprawling factory in Renton, Washington is a hive of activity on this sunny Wednesday during a tightly-managed media tour as Boeing tries to communicate confidence that it has nothing to hide.

Several employees working on the embattled 737 MAX plane don yellow vests and work in teams, with one group of staff gathered at a large table, poring over plane designs.

The new planes are painted green by Boeing before they are delivered to [commercial airlines](#), which then give them a makeover with their corporate brands. On this day, three new aircraft are ready to leave the factory.

After a once over of one of the planes, a [young woman](#) and her colleague plunge into discussion over a [plane](#) that still needs key components.

No questions for workers

It's impossible to know what the workers make of the March 10 Ethiopian Airlines crash, which left 157 dead, or the October catastrophe involving Lion Air, which claimed another 189 victims.

The Boeing 737 MAX has been grounded worldwide in light of the debacles. Another mystery is how the employees are reacting to speculation in local media that the stoppage could affect the plant.



Boeing presented its fix to the anti-stalling system for the 737 MAX planes, which have been grounded worldwide following two deadly crashes

Boeing has dismissed talk of production cuts or layoffs. But it cannot currently deliver new planes, which means it isn't receiving revenues, even as it continues to pay suppliers.

The visit is part of Boeing's strategy for trying to influence the narrative on the 737 MAX situation, which has badly bruised its reputation and standing with key industry and government figures in aviation.

The walk-through of the manufacturing area was part of a site visit opened to a select group of journalists. Reporters were shown around for 20 minutes and instructed not to ask questions or approach workers.

The tour was a high point in a carefully-scripted day as Boeing outlined its proposed fix for the anti-stalling system that has been under scrutiny since the Lion Air crash.

Located about 30 minutes to the southeast of Seattle, the factory employs 12,000 and shifts are split into eight hours. There are glimpses of robots doing tasks that are too delicate for humans.

Boeing has previously outlined a timetable to boost production of the 737 MAX from 52 per month to 57 starting in June. But that was before the Ethiopia Air crash created a cloud of uncertainty over the entire product line, which accounts for more than two-thirds of Boeing's order book.

Finished jets can be kept in storage in Renton, or transported to "Boeing Field," an open-air facility between Renton and Seattle.

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