

# Plane Blowout Raises Concerns

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and lose contact with 12 “stop pads” that keep the panel attached to the door frame on the plane, NTSB officials said at a news briefing in Portland.

NTSB Chair Jennifer Homendy said the safety board was investigating whether four bolts that help prevent the panel from sliding up on rollers were missing when the plane took off from Portland or whether they blew off “during the violent, explosive decompression event.”

The interior of the plane suffered extensive damage, but pilots were able to return to Portland and land safely. Officials say there were no serious injuries among the 171 passengers and six crew members. The lost door panel was found Sunday near Portland in the backyard of a school teacher's home. NTSB officials said it will be sent to the agency's lab in Wash-

ington, D.C., for detailed study that might help pinpoint why the plug broke loose.

Alaska and United have canceled hundreds of flights since the weekend because of their grounded planes. Alaska has 65 Max 9s, and United has 79. The airlines waited until Monday before Boeing and the FAA completed instructions for how to inspect their planes.

The jet involved in Friday's blowout is brand-new, having been put in service in November. After a cabin-pressurization system warning light came on during three flights, the airline stopped flying it over the Pacific to Hawaii. Some aviation experts questioned why Alaska continued using the plane on overland routes until it figured out what was causing the pressurization warnings. Homendy said Monday, however, that NTSB has seen no evidence to link the warnings with the blowout of the door plug.



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