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Marketplace Morning Edition Segment:

Does the FAA need to fix inspections?



TEXT OF STORY

Renita Jablonski: The FAA is working on improving the way it deals with airline safety. One thing they're tackling is how to ensure airlines are complying with safety directives, while trying to avoid cancellation chaos. Ashley Milne-Tyte reports.

Ashley Milne-Tyte: Both the FAA and the airlines say safety is their top concern. Ira Gershkoff is CEO of airline consulting firm JIT Airline Resources.

Ira Gershkoff: The only grade you can get on maintenance and safety is an A or an F. If you meet the requirement, you get an A; if you don't, you get an F.

Ashley Milne-Tyte: But multiple Fs lately have meant massive inconvenience as airlines cancel flights to perform mandated maintenance. Airline consultant Darryl Jenkins says those grounded aircraft were safe to fly, and the FAA overreacted. He says Congress recently scolded the agency for letting Southwest Airlines get away with safety violations, and that sent the FAA into regulatory overdrive.

Darryl Jenkins: It all had to do with the FAA showing off before Congress, and to me that's a total and complete abuse of public power.

Ashley Milne-Tyte: He says all the agency needs to do to ensure safety without chaos is to be consistent on safety, instead of being too lenient, and then too harsh.

In New York, I'm Ashley Milne-Tyte for Marketplace.