



Figure 16-59. Centralized manifolds from which air can be distributed are common.

increases the time in service of these expensive components and expedites expensive mandatory overhauls that are performed at specified time intervals. Most high-performance, medium size, and larger turbine-powered aircraft are fitted with a receptacle in the air distribution system. To this a ground source of conditioned air can be connected via a ducting hose. The cabin can be heated or cooled through the aircraft's air distribution ducting using air from the ground source. This limits the operating time on the engines and APU. Once preflight checks and passenger boarding are completed, the ducting hose can be disconnected for taxi and flight. A check valve is used to prevent ground source air from flowing upstream into the air conditioning system. [Figure 16-61]

Cabin Pressurization Troubleshooting

While pressurization systems on different aircraft operate similarly with similar components, it cannot be assumed that they are the same. Even those systems constructed by a single manufacturer likely have differences when installed on different aircraft. It is important to check the aircraft manufacturer's service information when troubleshooting the pressurization system. A fault, such as failure to pressurize or failure to maintain pressurization, can have many different causes. Adherence to the steps in a manufacturer's troubleshooting procedures is highly recommended to sequentially evaluate possible causes. Pressurization system test kits are available, or the aircraft can be pressurized by its normal sources during troubleshooting. A test flight may be required after maintenance.

Air Conditioning Systems

There are two types of air conditioning systems commonly used on aircraft. Air cycle air conditioning is used on most turbine-powered aircraft. It makes use of engine bleed air or APU pneumatic air during the conditioning process. Vapor cycle air conditioning systems are often used on reciprocating aircraft. This type system is similar to that found in homes and automobiles. Note that some turbine-powered aircraft also use vapor cycle air conditioning.

Air Cycle Air Conditioning

Air cycle air conditioning prepares engine bleed air to pressurize the aircraft cabin. The temperature and quantity of the air must be controlled to maintain a comfortable cabin environment at all altitudes and on the ground. The air cycle system is often called the air conditioning package or pack. It is usually located in the lower half of the fuselage or in the tail section of turbine-powered aircraft. [Figure 16-62]

System Operation

Even with the frigid temperatures experienced at high altitudes, bleed air is too hot to be used in the cabin without being cooled. It is let into the air cycle system and routed through a heat exchanger where ram air cools the bleed air. This cooled bleed air is directed into an air cycle machine. There, it is compressed before flowing through a secondary heat exchange that cools the air again with ram air. The bleed air then flows back into the air cycle machine where it drives an expansion turbine and cools even further. Water is then removed, and the air is mixed with bypassed bleed air for final temperature adjustment. It is sent to the cabin through the air distribution system. By examining the operation of each component in the air cycle process, a better understanding can be developed of how bleed air is conditioned for cabin use. Refer to Figure 16-63, which diagrams the air cycle air conditioning system of the Boeing 737.

Pneumatic System Supply

The air cycle air conditioning system is supplied with air by the aircraft pneumatic system. In turn, the pneumatic system is supplied by bleed air tap-offs on each engine compressor section or from the APU pneumatic supply. An external pneumatic air supply source may also be connected while the aircraft is stationary on the ground. In normal flight operations, a pneumatic manifold is supplied by the engine bleed air through the use of valves, regulators, and ducting. The air conditioning packs are supplied by this manifold as are other critical airframe systems, such as the anti-ice and hydraulic pressurization system.