

Go around! Wait...where are the TOGA buttons?!?

As if go-arounds weren't confusing enough, Boeing decided to have a little fun at the expense of the pilots and hid the TOGA buttons on the 737. Basically speaking, there are two opportunities to push the TOGA buttons on every flight. First, during takeoff and second, in the unlikely event of a go-around.

When cleared for takeoff, the pilot will push the thrust levers up far enough to stabilize the engines at about 40% N1, then push either or both TOGA buttons to automatically advance the engines to the takeoff limit and engage the Automatic Flight Director System (AFDS) in takeoff mode. Once airborne, pushing either of the TOGA buttons will advance engine power to the go-around limit and engage the AFDS in the go-around mode.



Only one visible in this picture...the small black button hidden underneath the throttle knobs.

In either case, finding and pushing the TOGA buttons is important and must be accomplished while the pilot is distracted by other tasks. On the MD80, the buttons were located in clear view and within easy reach. The pilot would simply move his wrist down and push the TOGA buttons with the palm of his hand. I was especially fond of this design because my hand was always in a position to both manipulate the throttles as necessary and to have quick access to the TOGA buttons. On the 737, these buttons are located in an unnatural location that I find hard to see and difficult to reach. During a typical approach and landing, the natural position of my hand does not lend itself to quickly engaging TOGA.