

decompression of the airplane, accomplish the following:

(a) Prior to the accumulation of 16,300 total flight cycles, or within 500 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, perform a one-time ultrasonic inspection for cracking of the gantry lower flanges in the MLG bay area, in accordance with Airbus All Operators Telex (AOT) 53-11, dated October 13, 1997.

(1) If any cracking is detected, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with the AOT.

(2) If no cracking is detected, no further action is required by this AD.

(b) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch, ANM-116.

(c) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 97-372-236(B), dated December 3, 1997.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on April 15, 1998.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98-10488 Filed 4-20-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98-NM-100-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Saab Model SAAB SF340A and SAAB 340B Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain Saab Model SAAB SF340A and SAAB 340B series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive,

detailed visual inspections of the windshield wiper assembly for discrepant conditions, and corrective actions, if necessary. This proposal is prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent failure of the windshield wiper assembly, which could result in loss of visibility, damage to the propeller(s), or penetration of the fuselage skin and consequent depressurization of the airplane.

DATES: Comments must be received by May 21, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-NM-100-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from Saab Aircraft AB, SAAB Aircraft Product Support, S-581.88, Linköping, Sweden. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Norman B. Martenson, Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2110; fax (425) 227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications shall identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments, specified above, will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposals contained in this notice may be changed in light of the comments received.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed rule. All comments submitted will be available, both before and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report summarizing each FAA-public contact

concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this notice must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 98-NM-100-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-NM-100-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The Luftfartsverket (LFV), which is the airworthiness authority for Sweden, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain Saab Model SAAB SF340A and SAAB 340B series airplanes. The LFV advises that it has received reports indicating that a windshield wiper blade separated from the wiper arm at the attachment point, which consists of two rivets that connect the wiper blade and arm tip to the wiper arm. On one airplane, the wiper blade struck and damaged a propeller and was thrown into the side of the airplane. The cause of the detachment of the blade has been attributed to the failure of the two rivets. Such failure could result in loss of visibility, damage to the propeller(s), or penetration of the fuselage skin and consequent depressurization of the airplane.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The manufacturer has issued SAAB Service Bulletin 340-30-081, dated November 14, 1997, including Attachment 1, Revision 1, dated September 14, 1997, which describes procedures for a one-time, detailed visual inspection of the windshield wiper assembly for discrepant conditions (corrosion; excessive wear; missing, loose, or broken parts; improper alignment; and insecure attachment), and corrective actions, if necessary. The corrective actions include repairing the arm tip assembly or replacing it with a new or serviceable part, if necessary. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition. The LFV classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued Swedish airworthiness directive 1-115R1, dated

November 17, 1997, in order to assure the airworthiness of these airplanes in Sweden.

FAA's Conclusions

These airplane models are manufactured in Sweden and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of § 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the LfV has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the LfV, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.

Explanation of Requirements of Proposed Rule

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other airplanes of the same type design registered in the United States, the proposed AD would require accomplishment of actions specified in the service bulletin described previously, except as discussed below.

Differences Between Proposed AD and Service Bulletin

Operators should note that, although the service bulletin does not contain a recommended interval for repetitive visual inspections, the FAA has determined that repetitive inspections are necessary to address the identified unsafe condition, since discrepancies in the windshield wiper assembly could develop and lead to failure following accomplishment of an inspection. In developing an appropriate repetitive inspection interval for this AD, the FAA considered the degree of urgency for the affected fleet, and the time necessary to perform the inspection (less than one hour). In light of these factors, the FAA finds a 1,000-flight-hour repetitive inspection interval to be warranted, in that it represents an appropriate interval of time for affected airplanes to continue to operate between inspections without compromising safety.

In addition, operators should note that, although the service bulletin does not specify repair methods, this proposed AD would require repair in accordance with a method approved by either the FAA or the LfV (or its delegated agent). In light of the type of repair that would be required to address the identified unsafe condition, and in consonance with existing bilateral airworthiness agreements, the FAA has determined that, for this proposed AD,

a repair approved by either the FAA or the LfV would be acceptable for compliance with this proposed AD.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 254 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 1 work hour per airplane to accomplish the proposed inspection, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the actions proposed by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$15,240, or \$60 per airplane, per inspection cycle.

The cost impact figure discussed above is based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the proposed requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this proposal would not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this proposed regulation (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) if promulgated, will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. A copy of the draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption ADDRESSES.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration proposes to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

SAAB Aircraft AB (Formerly SAAB

Fairchild): Docket 98–NM–100–AD.

Applicability: Model SAAB SF340A series airplanes, manufacturer's serial numbers 004 through 159 inclusive; and SAAB 340B series airplanes, manufacturer's serial numbers 160 through 399 inclusive; certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For airplanes that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (b) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent failure of the windshield wiper assembly, which could result in loss of visibility, damage to the propeller(s), or penetration of the fuselage skin and consequent depressurization of the airplane, accomplish the following:

(a) Prior to the accumulation of 4,000 total flight hours, or within 3 months after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, perform a detailed visual inspection of the windshield wiper assembly for discrepancies (corrosion; excessive wear; missing, loose, or broken parts; improper alignment; and insecure attachment), in accordance with Saab Service Bulletin 340–30–081, dated November 14, 1997, including Attachment 1, Revision 1, dated September 14, 1997.

(1) If no discrepancy is detected during the inspection, repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 1,000 flight hours.

(2) If any discrepancy is detected during any inspection, prior to further flight, replace the windshield wiper assembly with a new or serviceable windshield wiper assembly, or repair in accordance with a method approved either by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, or by the Luftfartsverket (or its delegated agent). Repeat the detailed visual inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 1,000 flight hours.

(b) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager,

International Branch, ANM-116. Operators shall submit their request through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch, ANM-116.

(c) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with §§ 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in Swedish airworthiness directive 1-115R1, dated November 17, 1997.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on April 15, 1998.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98-10487 Filed 4-20-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98-NM-115-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; British Aerospace (Jetstream) Model 4101 Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain British Aerospace (Jetstream) Model 4101 airplanes. This proposal would require installation of a warning placard for the fire extinguisher exhaust port located in the rear baggage bay. This proposal is prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent blockage of the fire extinguisher exhaust port, which could result in reduced fire protection in the rear baggage bay and consequent injury to the passengers and crewmembers.

DATES: Comments must be received by May 21, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport

Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-NM-115-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from AI(R) American Support Inc., 13850 Mclearen Road, Herndon, Virginia 20171, USA. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Norman B. Martenson, Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2110; fax (425) 227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications shall identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments, specified above, will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposals contained in this notice may be changed in light of the comments received.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed rule. All comments submitted will be available, both before and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report summarizing each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this notice must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 98-NM-115-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-NM-115-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), which is the airworthiness authority for the United Kingdom, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain British Aerospace (Jetstream) Model 4101 airplanes. The CAA advises that an operator reported an incident in which the fire extinguisher exhaust port located in the rear baggage bay had been covered with tape. The tape had been applied during maintenance to repair a damaged evaporator unit box that also mounted to the exhaust port, and was not removed. The CAA further advises that, without the proper warning placard, the fire extinguisher exhaust port could again inadvertently become covered or blocked by cargo or baggage, which could prevent fire extinguishing chemicals from entering the rear baggage bay. Such blockage of the fire extinguisher exhaust port, if not corrected, could result in reduced fire protection in the rear baggage bay and consequent injury to passengers and crewmembers.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The manufacturer has issued British Aerospace Regional Aircraft Service Bulletin J41-11-020, dated November 10, 1997, which describes procedures for installation of a warning placard near the fire extinguisher exhaust port in the rear baggage bay. The new placard will provide clear and visible warning that reads: "FIRE EXTINGUISHER EXHAUST PORT—DO NOT OBSTRUCT OR BLANK OFF." Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition. The CAA classified this service bulletin as mandatory in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in the United Kingdom.

FAA's Conclusions

This airplane model is manufactured in the United Kingdom and is type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of § 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the CAA has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the CAA, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.