

accomplished: Prior to the accumulation of 32,000 total flight cycles, or within 2 years after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, modify the lapjoint below the chine line between fuselage station 1400 and station 5050, in accordance with Part 1 of the Accomplishment Instructions of Fokker Service Bulletin F27/53-116, dated April 15, 1994. Accomplishment of this modification and accomplishment of the requirements of paragraph (b) of this AD, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of items 53-30-02 and 53-30-03 of the Fokker Model F27 Structural Inspection Program (SIP), as required by AD 96-13-07, amendment 39-9675.

(b) For airplanes on which Fokker Service Bulletin F27/53-85, dated February 16, 1970, has not been accomplished: Prior to the accumulation of 32,000 total flight cycles, or within 2 years after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, modify the lapjoint below the chine line between fuselage station 5050 and station 12975, in accordance with Part 2 of the Accomplishment Instructions of Fokker Service Bulletin F27/53-116, dated April 15, 1994. Accomplishment of this modification and accomplishment of the requirements of paragraph (a) of this AD, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of items 53-30-02 and 53-30-03 of the Fokker Model F27 SIP, as required by AD 96-13-07.

(c) For airplanes on which Fokker Service Bulletin F27/53-85, dated February 16, 1970, has not been accomplished: Prior to the accumulation of 56,000 total flight cycles, or within 2 years after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, modify the lapjoint below the chine line between fuselage station 12975 and station 16660, in accordance with Part 3 of the Accomplishment Instructions of Fokker Service Bulletin F27/53-116, dated April 15, 1994. Accomplishment of this modification constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of item 53-30-04 of the Fokker Model F27 SIP, as required by AD 96-13-07.

(d) 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.

(e) 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 Dutch airworthiness directive BLA 94-092 (A), dated May 25, 1994.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on February 5, 1998.

**Darrell M. Pederson,**

*Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-3514 Filed 2-11-98; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-CE-76-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

#### Airworthiness Directives; SOCATA Groupe Aerospatiale Model TBM 700 Airplanes

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** This document proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) that would apply to certain SOCATA Groupe Aerospatiale Model TBM 700 airplanes. The proposed action would require inspecting the elevator trim tab for cracks, and replacing any elevator trim tab part found to have cracks. The proposed AD is the result of mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) issued by the airworthiness authority for France. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent cracks in the elevator trim tab fitting, which, if not detected and corrected, could result in separation of the elevator trim tab and loss of control of the airplane.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before March 16, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-CE-76-AD, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106. Comments may be inspected at this location between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, holidays excepted.

Service information that applies to the proposed AD may be obtained from SOCATA Groupe Aerospatiale, Customer Support, Aerodrome Tarbes-Ossun-Lourdes, BP 930-F65009 Tarbes Cedex, France; telephone (33) 62.41.73.00; facsimile (33) 62.41.76.54; or the Product Support Manager, SOCATA Groupe AEROSPATIALE, North Perry Airport, 7501 Pembroke Road, Pembroke Pines, Florida 33023;

telephone (954) 964-6877; facsimile: (954) 964-1668. This information also may be examined at the Rules Docket at the address above.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Karl Schletzbaum, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Small Airplane Directorate, 1201 Walnut Street, Suite 900, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; telephone (816) 426-6934; facsimile (816) 426-2169.

#### 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 should 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 that summarizes 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 No. 97-CE-76-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, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-CE-76-AD, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

##### Discussion

The Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain SOCATA Groupe Aerospatiale TBM 700 airplanes. The DGAC reports that cracks in the elevator trim tab were found during routine maintenance inspections.

Investigation on the cause of the cracking showed that a particular batch of elevator trim tab fittings were defective from the manufacturer. Continued progression of the cracks in these elevator trim tab fittings could reduce the structural soundness of the elevator trim tab. This condition, if not corrected, could result in separation of the elevator trim tab from the airplane and cause loss of control of the airplane.

#### Relevant Service Information

SOCATA has issued Mandatory Service Bulletin No. 70-079-55, dated April 1996, which specifies procedures for inspecting for cracks in the elevator trim tab fittings and replacing any cracked part.

The DGAC classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued French AD 96-118(B), dated June 19, 1996, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

#### The FAA's Determination

The SOCATA Model TBM 700 airplane is manufactured in France and is type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the DGAC has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above.

The FAA has examined the findings of the DGAC, reviewed all available information including the service information referenced above, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.

#### Explanation of the Provisions of the Proposed AD

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop in other SOCATA Model TBM 700 series airplanes of the same type design registered in the United States, the proposed AD would require inspecting the elevator trim tab fittings for cracks using a dye penetrant method, and replacing any cracked part. Accomplishment of the proposed inspection and replacement would be in accordance with SOCATA TBM Aircraft Service Bulletin No. SB 70-079-55, dated April 1996.

#### Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 16 airplanes in the U.S. registry would be affected by the proposed AD, that it would take approximately 1 workhour per airplane

to accomplish the proposed action, and that the average labor rate is approximately \$60 an hour. Parts cost approximately \$200 per airplane. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$4,160 or \$260 per airplane.

#### 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 action (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under 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 has been placed 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 a new airworthiness directive (AD) to read as follows:

**SOCATA Groupe Aerospatiale:** Docket No. 97-CE-76-AD.

**Applicability:** Model TBM 700 airplanes (all serial numbers), 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 (e) 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 within the next 100 hours time-in-service (TIS) after the effective date of this AD, unless already accomplished.

To prevent cracks in the elevator trim tab fitting, which, if not detected and corrected, could result in separation of the elevator trim tab and loss of control of the airplane, accomplish the following:

(a) Inspect the left and right-hand elevator trim tab fittings for cracks using a dye penetrant aerosol method in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions section in SOCATA TBM Aircraft Service Bulletin (SB) No. 70-079-55, dated April, 1996.

(b) If cracks are found, prior to further flight, replace the cracked part with one of improved design in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions section in SOCATA TBM Aircraft SB No. 70-079-55, dated April, 1996.

(c) No person may install an elevator trim tab fitting manufactured between January 1, 1993 and February 29, 1996, on any of the affected airplanes.

(d) 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.

(e) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an equivalent level of safety may be approved by the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1201 Walnut, Suite 900, Kansas City, Missouri 64106. The request shall be forwarded through an appropriate FAA Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate.

**Note 2:** Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Small Airplane Directorate.

(f) Questions or technical information related to Service Bulletin No. 70-079-55, issued April 1996, should be directed to SOCATA Groupe AEROSPATIALE, Customer Support, Aerodrome Tarbes-Ossun-Lourdes, BP 930—F65009 Tarbes Cedex, France; telephone (33) 62.41.73.00; facsimile 62.41.76.54; or the Product Support Manager, SOCATA—Groupe AEROSPATIALE, North Perry Airport, 7501 Pembroke Road, Pembroke Pines, Florida 33023; telephone (954) 964-6877; facsimile: (954) 964-1668. This service information may be examined at the FAA, Central Region, Office of the

Regional Counsel, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

**Note 3:** The subject of this AD is addressed in French AD 96-118(B), dated June 19, 1996.

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on February 4, 1998.

**John R. Colomy,**

*Acting Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-3513 Filed 2-11-98; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-CE-104-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

#### Airworthiness Directives; Alexander Schleicher Model ASK-21 Sailplanes

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** This document proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) that would apply to Alexander Schleicher (Schleicher) Model ASK-21 sailplanes. The proposed action would require inspecting the S-shaped rudder pedal tube for displacement, and correcting any displacement of the plastic tube. The proposed AD is the result of mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) issued by the airworthiness authority for Germany. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent rudder control jamming, which, if not corrected, could result in loss of directional control of the sailplane.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before March 17, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-CE-104-AD, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106. Comments may be inspected at this location between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, holidays excepted.

Service information that applies to the proposed AD may be obtained from Alexander Schleicher, Segelflugzeugbau, 6416 Poppenhausen, Wasserkuppe, Federal Republic of Germany; telephone 49.6658.890 or 49.6658.8920; facsimile: 49.6658.8923 or 49.6658.8940. This information also may be examined at the Rules Docket at the address above.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. J. Mike Kiesov, Project Officer, Sailplanes/Gliders, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service, FAA, 1201 Walnut, suite 900, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; telephone (816) 426-6932; facsimile (816) 426-2169.

#### 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 should 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 that summarizes 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 No. 97-CE-104-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, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-CE-104-AD, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

##### Discussion

The Luftfahrt-Bundesamt (LBA), which is the airworthiness authority for the Federal Republic of Germany, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain Schleicher Model ASK-21 sailplanes. The LBA reports that the plastic tube in the S-shaped rudder pedal tube is slipping out of the rudder pedal tube and causing the rudder pedal to jam. This condition, if not corrected, could

result in loss of directional control of the sailplane.

##### Relevant Service Information

Alexander Schleicher has issued Technical Note No. 20, dated October 16, 1987, which specifies procedures for inspecting the plastic S-shaped rudder pedal tube for displacement. If the tube is displaced, the technical note requires that the displacement of the plastic tube be corrected.

The LBA classified this technical note as mandatory and issued AD 88-2 Schleicher, dated January 18, 1988, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these sailplanes in Germany.

##### The FAA's Determination

The Alexander Schleicher Model ASK-21 sailplanes are manufactured in Germany and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the LBA has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the LBA, reviewed all available information including the service information referenced above, and determined that AD action is necessary for sailplanes of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.

##### Explanation of the Provisions of the Proposed AD

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop in other Alexander Schleicher Model ASK-21 sailplanes of the same type design registered in the United States, the proposed AD would require inspecting the plastic S-shaped rudder pedal tube for displacement. If the rudder tube is displaced, the proposed action would require correcting the placement of the plastic S-shaped rudder pedal tube. Accomplishment of the proposed inspection would be in accordance with the Actions sections 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 of Alexander Schleicher Technical Note No. 20, dated October 16, 1987.

##### Proposed Compliance Time

The proposed action, the LBA AD, and the Alexander Schleicher Technical Note No. 20, dated October 16, 1987, differ on compliance time. The LBA AD and the Technical Note require that the inspection for displacement of the plastic tube be accomplished prior to further flight.