

98-24-01, amendment 39-10888), whichever occurs later: Perform a detailed visual inspection to detect cracking or other damage of the diaphragms installed between station 4 and station 8 of the forward fuselage, in accordance with Jetstream Alert Service Bulletin J41-A53-023, dated December 2, 1996, or Revision 1, dated July 30, 1999.

Note 2: For the purposes of this AD, a detailed visual inspection is defined as: "An intensive visual examination of a specific structural area, system, installation, or assembly to detect damage, failure, or irregularity. Available lighting is normally supplemented with a direct source of good lighting at intensity deemed appropriate by the inspector. Inspection aids such as mirror, magnifying lenses, etc., may be used. Surface cleaning and elaborate access procedures may be required."

(1) If no cracking or other damage is detected, repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 3,000 landings.

(2) If any cracking or other damage is detected, prior to further flight, accomplish the actions required by either paragraph (a)(2)(i) or (a)(2)(ii). After the effective date of this AD, only replacement of the diaphragms in accordance with paragraph (a)(2)(ii) of this AD is acceptable for compliance with the repair requirements of this paragraph.

(i) Repair the diaphragm in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate. Thereafter, repeat the inspection at intervals not to exceed 3,000 landings.

(ii) Replace both diaphragms with new, improved diaphragms, in accordance with Part 2 of the Accomplishment Instructions of Jetstream Alert Service Bulletin J41-A53-023, Revision 1, dated July 30, 1999. Such replacement constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by this AD.

New Repetitive Inspections and Corrective Actions Required by This AD:

(b) For airplanes other than those listed in paragraph (a) of this AD: Prior to the accumulation of 4,500 total landings, or within 300 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, perform a detailed visual inspection to detect cracking or other damage of the diaphragms installed between station 4 and station 8 of the forward fuselage, in accordance with Jetstream Alert Service Bulletin J41-A53-023, Revision 1, dated July 30, 1999.

(1) If no cracking or other damage is detected, repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 3,000 landings.

(2) If any cracking or other damage is detected, prior to further flight, replace both diaphragms with new, improved diaphragms, in accordance with Part 2 of the Accomplishment Instructions of Jetstream Alert Service Bulletin J41-A53-023, Revision 1, dated July 30, 1999. Such replacement constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by this AD.

(c) Replacement of diaphragms with new, improved diaphragms, in accordance with Part 2 of the Accomplishment Instructions of Jetstream Alert Service Bulletin J41-A53-023, Revision 1, dated July 30, 1999,

constitutes terminating action for the requirements of this AD.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

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

Special Flight Permits

(e) 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.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on November 19, 1999.

D.L. Riggins,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 99-30799 Filed 11-24-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99-NM-307-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 777-200 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 Boeing Model 777-200 series airplanes. This proposal would require one-time inspections to detect cracking of the aft wheel well bulkhead, and corrective actions, if necessary. This proposal also would require modification of the aft wheel well bulkhead. For certain airplanes, this proposal also would require a one-time visual inspection to detect excess sealant covering the outer flange of the side fitting and lower chord and splice area of the aft wheel well bulkhead, and corrective actions, if necessary. This proposal is prompted by a report

indicating that numerous fatigue cracks were found in the aft wheel well bulkhead. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent fatigue cracking of the aft wheel well bulkhead, which could result in rapid in-flight decompression of the airplane.

DATES: Comments must be received by January 10, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99-NM-307-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 Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124-2207. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stan Wood, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120S, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2772; fax (425) 227-1181.

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 99-NM-307-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. 99-NM-307-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received a report indicating numerous fatigue cracks have been found in the aft wheel well bulkhead of a Boeing Model 777-200 test airplane. During full-scale fatigue testing of the airplane, cracks between 0.15 to 1.5 inches long occurred at 55,186 flight cycles. The cracks were detected at the bulkhead web cut-out for the air driven pump duct, at the side fitting to lower chord splice area, and both sides of the splice joint of the aft wheel well bulkhead. At 110,000 flight cycles, cracks were detected in the vertical flange of the lower chord at the fairing support bracket attachment. Such fatigue cracking, if not detected and corrected, could result in rapid in-flight decompression of the airplane.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 777-53A0015, dated June 17, 1999, which describes procedures for a one-time visual inspection to detect cracking of the adjacent structure of the aft wheel well bulkhead, and a one-time high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspection to detect cracking of certain fastener holes in the web, side fitting, and outer chord of the aft wheel well bulkhead, and corrective actions, if necessary. The corrective actions involve, for certain airplanes, removing additional fasteners, oversizing the cracked fastener holes, performing additional HFEC inspections, and replacing the fasteners with new fasteners.

For certain airplanes, Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 777-53A0015, dated June 17, 1999, describes procedures for modification of the aft wheel well bulkhead. The modification involves cold working certain fastener holes; replacing the fairing support brackets and splice plates with revised fairing support brackets and splice plates; and installing new web doublers and, if necessary, shims.

Additionally, for certain airplanes, Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 777-53A0015, dated June 17, 1999, describes procedures for a one-time visual inspection to detect excess sealant covering the outer flange of the side fitting and lower chord and splice of the aft wheel well bulkhead, and corrective actions, if necessary. The corrective actions involve removing the excess sealant between stringers S-27L to S-27R prior to accomplishing the inspections and modification of the aft wheel well bulkhead.

Accomplishment of the actions specified in the alert service bulletin is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition.

Explanation of Requirements of Proposed Rule

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

Differences Between Proposed Rule and Alert Service Bulletin

Operators should note that, although the Boeing alert service bulletin specifies that the manufacturer may be contacted for disposition of certain cracking conditions, this proposal would require the repair of those conditions to be accomplished in accordance with a method approved by the FAA.

Additionally, operators also should note that, this proposed AD would require, removal of excess sealant in the remaining area between stringers S-27L and S-27R, prior to further flight, upon completion of the aft wheel well bulkhead modification. The alert service bulletin recommends that the excess sealant be removed prior to the threshold specified for fatigue inspections in Section 9 of the Maintenance Planning Document (MPD). In developing the appropriate compliance time, the FAA considered the manufacturer's recommendation and the degree of urgency associated with addressing the subject unsafe condition. In light of these factors, the FAA finds that the compliance time specified by this proposed AD to be appropriate.

Cost Impact

There are approximately 109 airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 35 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD.

For all airplanes, it would take approximately 2 work hours per airplane to accomplish the general visual and HFEC inspections at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the these inspections proposed by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$120 per airplane.

For all airplanes, it would take approximately 28 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed modification at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Required parts would be approximately \$6,013 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the modification proposed by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$7,693 per airplane.

For certain airplanes, it would take 3 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed inspection to detect excess sealant at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the this inspection proposed by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$180 per airplane.

The cost impact figures discussed above are 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:

Boeing: Docket 99–NM–307–AD.

Applicability: Model 777–200 series airplanes having line numbers 1 through 144; certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been otherwise 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 (c) 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 fatigue cracking of the aft wheel well bulkhead, which could result in rapid in-flight decompression of the airplane, accomplish the following:

General Visual Inspection

(a) For Group 1 airplanes, as identified in Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 777–53A0015, dated June 17, 1999: Prior to the accumulation of 11,000 total flight cycles, or within 4,000 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, perform a one-time general visual inspection to detect excess sealant covering the outer flange of the side fitting and lower chord and splice of the aft wheel well bulkhead, in accordance with Part I of the Accomplishment Instructions of the alert service bulletin.

Note 2: For the purposes of this AD, a general visual inspection is defined as: “A visual examination of an interior or exterior area, installation, or assembly to detect obvious damage, failure, or irregularity. This level of inspection is made under normally available lighting conditions such as daylight, hangar lighting, flashlight, or drop-

light, and may require removal or opening of access panels or doors. Stands, ladders, or platforms may be required to gain proximity to the area being checked.”

(1) If no excess sealant is detected, no further action is required by this paragraph.

(2) If any excess sealant is detected, prior to further flight, remove the excess sealant from the aft wheel well bulkhead area in accordance with the alert service bulletin.

Inspections/Modification

(b) For Groups 1 and 2 airplanes, as identified in Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 777–53A0015, dated June 17, 1999: Prior to the accumulation of 11,000 total flight cycles, or within 4,000 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, perform a one-time general visual inspection to detect cracking of the adjacent structure of the aft wheel well bulkhead and perform a one-time high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspection to detect cracking of the fastener holes in the web, side fitting, and outer chord of the aft wheel well bulkhead, in accordance with Part II of the Accomplishment Instructions of the alert service bulletin.

(1) If no cracking is detected during the general visual and HFEC inspections, prior to further flight, modify the aft wheel well bulkhead (including cold working; replacing the fairing support bracket and splice plates with revised fairing support brackets and splice plates; and installing new web doublers and, if necessary, shims), in accordance with Part II of the Accomplishment Instructions of the alert service bulletin.

(2) If any cracking is detected during the general visual inspection, prior to further flight, accomplish the requirements of paragraph (c) of this AD.

(3) If any cracking is detected during the one-time HFEC inspection, prior to further flight, remove additional fasteners, and perform a second HFEC inspection to detect cracking of the fastener holes, in accordance with Part II of the Accomplishment Instructions of the alert service bulletin.

(i) If no cracking is detected during the second HFEC inspection, prior to further flight, oversize all the holes to the diameter specified in the alert service bulletin, and perform a third HFEC inspection to detect cracking of the fastener holes, in accordance with Part II of the Accomplishment Instructions of the alert service bulletin.

(A) If no cracking is detected during the third HFEC inspection, prior to further flight, replace the fasteners with new fasteners and modify the aft wheel well bulkhead (including cold working; replacing the fairing support bracket and splice plates with revised fairing support brackets and splice plates; and installing new web doublers and, if necessary, shims), in accordance with Part II of the Accomplishment Instructions of the alert service bulletin.

(B) If any cracking is detected during the third HFEC inspection, prior to further flight, accomplish the requirements of paragraph (c) of this AD.

(ii) If any cracking is detected during the second HFEC inspection, prior to further flight, accomplish the requirements of paragraph (c) of this AD.

(c) For airplanes on which cracking has been detected during any inspection required by paragraph (b)(2), (b)(3)(i)(B), or (b)(3)(ii), prior to further flight, repair in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Seattle Airplane Certification Office (ACO), FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate; or in accordance with data meeting the type certification basis of the airplane approved by a Boeing Company Designated Engineering Representative who has been authorized by the Manager, Seattle ACO, to make such findings. For a repair method to be approved by the Manager, Seattle ACO, as required by this paragraph, the Manager's approval letter must specifically reference this AD.

(d) For Group 1 airplanes, as identified in Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 777–53A0015, dated June 17, 1999, on which excess sealant was detected and removed in accordance with paragraph (a) of this AD: Prior to further flight following the accomplishment of the modification required by paragraph (b) of this AD, remove any excess sealant in the remaining area of the lower lobe of the aft wheel well bulkhead between stringers S–27L and S–27R, in accordance with the alert service bulletin.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(e) 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, Seattle ACO. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Seattle ACO.

Note 3: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Seattle ACO.

Special Flight Permits

(f) 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.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on November 19, 1999.

D.L. Riggan,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION**17 CFR Part 1****RIN 3038–ZA01****Proposed Revision of the Commission's Procedure for the Review of Contract Market Rules**

AGENCY: Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

ACTION: Request for comment.