

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 95–CE–64–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; SOCATA—Groupe AEROSPATIALE Models TB20, and TB21 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 (Socata) Models TB20 and TB21 airplanes. The proposed action would require repetitively inspecting the main landing gear (MLG) attachment bearing (using a dye penetrant method) for cracks, and if cracks are found, replacing the bearing. 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 MLG attachment bearing, which could result in collapse of the main landing gear during taxi and landing operations.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before July 20, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 95–CE–64–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 the SOCATA—Groupe AEROSPATIALE, Socata Product Support, Aeroport Tarbes-Ossun-Lourdes, B P 930, 65009

Tarbes Cedex, France; telephone: 62.41.74.26; facsimile: 62.41.74.32; 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. 95–CE–64–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. 95–CE–64–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 Models TB20 and TB21 airplanes. The DGAC reports that some MLG's have collapsed due to failed MLG attachment bearings. Further analysis of the failed MLG attachment bearings revealed cracks which are due to fatigue.

These conditions, if not detected and corrected, could result in collapse of the airplane's main landing gear during taxi or landing operations.

Relevant Service Information

Socata has issued Service Bulletin No. SB 10–080 57, Amdt. 2, dated November 1995, which specifies procedures for repetitively inspecting (using a dye penetrant method) the MLG attachment bearing for cracks. If cracks are found in the attachment bearing, the service information specifies procedures for replacing the bearing.

The DGAC classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued French AD 94–266(A)R2, dated December 6, 1995, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

The FAA's Determination

These airplane models are manufactured in France 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 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 Models TB20

and TB21 airplanes of the same type design registered in the United States, the FAA is proposing AD action. The proposed AD would require repetitively inspecting (using a dye penetrant method) for cracks on the MLG attachment bearing. If cracks are found, the proposed AD would require replacing the cracked attachment bearing. Accomplishment of the proposed inspections and replacement would be in accordance with Socata Service Bulletin No. SB 10-080 57, Amdt. 2, dated November 1995.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 199 airplanes in the U.S. registry would be affected by the proposed AD.

Accomplishing the proposed inspection would take approximately 4 workhours per airplane, and the average labor rate is approximately \$60 an hour. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed inspection on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$47,760, or \$240 per airplane.

The proposed replacement would take approximately 1 workhour to replace the bearing, if necessary, at an average labor rate of \$60 per hour. Parts cost approximately \$800 per airplane. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed modification on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$171,140 or \$860 per airplane.

The FAA has no way to determine the number of repetitive inspections that would be incurred over the life of the 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. 95-CE-64-AD.

Applicability: Models TB20 and TB21 airplanes, serial numbers 1 through 9999, 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 (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 in the body of this AD, unless already accomplished.

To prevent cracks in the main landing gear (MLG) attachment bearing, which could result in collapse of the MLG during taxi and landing operations, accomplish the following:

Note 2: The compliance times of this AD are presented in landings instead of hours time-in-service (TIS). If the number of landings is unknown, hours TIS may be used by multiplying the number of hours TIS by 1.5.

(a) Upon the accumulation of 6,000 landings, upon the accumulation of 4,000 hours total TIS, or within the next 100 hours TIS after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, inspect (with a dye penetrant method) the main landing gear (MLG) attachment bearing for cracks in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions in SOCATA Service Bulletin

(SB) No. SB 10-080 57, Amdt. 2, dated November 1995;

(1) If no cracks are found, continue to inspect the MLG attachment bearing for cracks at intervals not to exceed 1,500 landings or 1,000 hours TIS, whichever occurs later, until cracks are found, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions in the SOCATA SB No. SB 10-080 57, Amdt. 2, dated November 1995;

(2) If cracks are found in the MLG attachment bearing during any inspection required by this AD, prior to further flight, replace the MLG attachment bearing in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions in the SOCATA SB No. SB 10-080 57, Amdt. 2, dated November 1995; and

(3) Upon the accumulation of 6,000 landings or 4,000 hours TIS after the date of any MLG attachment bearing replacement, whichever occurs later, and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 1,500 landings or 1,000 hours TIS, inspect the MLG attachment bearing for cracks as specified in paragraph (a) of this AD.

(b) 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.

(c) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the initial or repetitive compliance times 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 3: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Small Airplane Directorate.

(d) Questions or technical information related to Socata Service Bulletin No. SB 10-080 57, Amdt. 2, dated November 1995, should be directed to the SOCATA—Groupe AEROSPATIALE, Tarbes-Ossun-Lourdes, B P 930, 65009 Tarbes Cedex, France; telephone: 33.5.62.41.73.58; facsimile: 33.5.62.41.74.18; or the Product Support Manager, SOCATA—Groupe AEROSPATIALE, North Perry Airport, 7501 Pembroke Road, Pembroke Pines, Florida 33023; telephone: (954) 893-1160; facsimile: (954) 964-4141. 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 4: The subject of this AD is addressed in French AD 94-266(A)R2, dated December 6, 1995.

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on June 19, 1998.

James E. Jackson,

Acting Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98-17019 Filed 6-25-98; 8:45 am]

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