

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

(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.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on July 8, 1998.

S.R. Miller,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-NM-296-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747 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 747 series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive inspections to detect cracks in the edge frame web and doubler of the number 1 main entry door cutout; and repair, if necessary. This proposed AD also provides for optional terminating action for the repetitive inspections. This proposal is prompted by reports indicating that fatigue cracks were found in the edge frame web and doubler at the door stop number 1 of the number 1 main entry door cutout. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to detect and correct such fatigue cracking, which could result in rapid decompression of the airplane.

DATES: Comments must be received by August 31, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-NM-296-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: Bob Breneman, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120S, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2776; 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 97-NM-296-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. 97-NM-296-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received reports indicating that, while replacing the inner chord of the frame on Boeing Model 747 series airplanes, cracks were found in the edge frame web and

doubler of the number 1 main entry door cutout at station 488, between stringers 25 and 26 (door stop number 1). The edge frame web in each incident was almost completely severed. These airplanes had accumulated as few as 18,502 total flight cycles. In addition, the FAA has received a report indicating that, during fatigue testing on a Boeing Model 747SR test article, cracking occurred in the edge frame web at 27,500 total pressure cycles and in the inner chord at 30,750 total pressure cycles. The cause of such cracking in all incidents has been attributed to fatigue. This condition, if not detected and corrected, could result in rapid decompression of the airplane.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747-53A2414, dated August 7, 1997. This alert service bulletin describes procedures for repetitive high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspections to detect cracks in both the aft side of the edge frame web along the lower edge of the backup structure attachment at the stop fitting number 1, and the forward side of the doubler at the lower edge of door stop number 1 of the number 1 main entry door cutout; and repair, if necessary.

The alert service bulletin specifies that operators of Group 1 airplanes are to perform those inspections of the subject areas on both the left and right sides of the airplane; whereas, operators of Group 2 airplanes are to perform those inspections of the subject areas on the left side only of the airplane. Group 1 airplanes are those Model 747 series airplanes that have a number 1 main entry door on both the left and right sides of the airplane. Group 2 airplanes are those Model 747 series airplanes that only have a number 1 main entry door on the left side of the airplane.

This alert service bulletin also describes procedures for a preventative modification of the edge frame web and doubler, which involves trimming the lower portion of the subject web; removing the trimmed web and the doubler; and installing a new web, doubler, and splice plate. For airplanes on which the inner chord of the edge frame is not being replaced concurrently with the repair specified in the alert service bulletin, the procedures also include an open hole HFEC inspection of the inner chord of the edge frame. Accomplishment of the preventative modification would eliminate the need for the repetitive inspections. 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 inspections and repair, if necessary, specified in the alert service bulletin described previously. The proposed AD also provides for optional terminating action, which, if accomplished, would terminate the repetitive inspections.

The FAA considers three criteria for those situations where repetitive inspections of a crack-prone area, such as in this proposed AD, may be permitted to continue indefinitely, even though a positive fix to the problem exists: (1) the area is easily accessible, (2) the cracking is easily detectable, and (3) the consequences of the cracking are not likely to be catastrophic. In consideration of the cracking that may occur at the edge frame web and doubler at station 488, the FAA has determined that the circumstances warranting continual repetitive inspections meet these three criteria.

Cost Impact

There are approximately 685 airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 211 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour.

The FAA estimates that 191 airplanes are equipped with a number 1 main entry door on both the left and right sides (Group 1 airplanes), that it would take approximately 2 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed inspection, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the inspection proposed by this AD on U.S. operators of these airplanes is estimated to be \$22,920, or \$120 per airplane, per inspection cycle.

The FAA estimates that 20 airplanes are equipped with a number 1 main entry door on the left side only (Group 2 airplanes), that it would take approximately 1 work hour per airplane to accomplish the proposed inspection, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the inspection proposed by this AD on U.S. operators of these airplanes is estimated to be \$1,200, or \$60 per airplane, per inspection cycle.

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.

Should an operator of Group 1 airplanes elect to accomplish the optional terminating action that would be provided by this AD action, it would take approximately 40 work hours to accomplish it, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the optional terminating action would be \$2,400 per airplane.

Should an operator of Group 2 airplanes elect to accomplish the optional terminating action that would be provided by this AD action, it would take approximately 20 work hours to accomplish it, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the optional terminating action would be \$1,200 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 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 97-NM-296-AD.

Applicability: Model 747 series airplanes, line numbers 1 through 685 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 (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 as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To detect and correct fatigue cracks in the edge frame web and doubler of the number 1 main entry door cutout, which could result in rapid decompression of the airplane, accomplish the following:

(a) Perform a high frequency eddy current (HFEC) (pencil probe eddy current) inspection to detect cracks in both the aft side of the lower edge frame web and the forward side of the edge frame web doubler at station 488, between stringers 25 and 26 (door stop number 1), of the number 1 main entry door cutout; in accordance with Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747-53A2414, dated August 7, 1997; at the time specified in paragraph (a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(3), or (a)(4) of this AD, as applicable. For Group 1 airplanes (as identified in the alert service bulletin), the inspection shall be accomplished on both the left and right sides of the airplane. For Group 2 airplanes (as identified in the alert service bulletin), the inspection shall be accomplished only on the left side of the airplane.

(1) For airplanes that have accumulated less than 16,000 total flight cycles as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 16,000 total flight cycles, or within 1,500 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(2) For airplanes that have accumulated 16,000 or more total flight cycles but less than 20,000 total flight cycles as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 21,000 total flight cycles, or within 1,500 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs first.

(3) For airplanes that have accumulated 20,000 or more total flight cycles but less than 25,000 total flight cycles as of the

effective date of this AD: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 25,500 total flight cycles, or within 1,000 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs first.

(4) For airplanes that have accumulated 25,000 or more total flight cycles as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect within 500 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD.

(b) If no crack is detected during any inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD, repeat the HFEC inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 3,000 flight cycles.

(c) If any crack is detected during any inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747-53A2414, dated August 7, 1997.

Note 2: The alert service bulletin emphasizes the importance of performing an open hole HFEC inspection of the inner chord of the frame within 6.0 inches of the web or doubler crack (as applicable), if the inner chord of the frame is not replaced concurrently with the web and doubler repair.

(d) Accomplishment of the repair or preventative modification specified in Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747-53A2414, dated August 7, 1997, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of this AD for that repaired/modified edge frame web and doubler.

(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 Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), 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, 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.

(f) 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.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on July 8, 1998.

S.R. Miller,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98-18778 Filed 7-14-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-NM-51-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 767 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 767 series airplanes. This proposal would require detailed visual inspections to detect corrosion or chrome plating cracks on the fuse pins, load distribution plates, and bushings of the outboard support of the main landing gear (MLG) beam. This proposal also would require either installation of the existing fuse pins and repetitive inspections; or installation of newer-type fuse pins, which would constitute terminating action for the repetitive inspections. This proposal is prompted by a report indicating that corrosion was found on a fuse pin in the outboard support of the MLG beam. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to detect and correct such corrosion and cracking, which could result in the failure of a fuse pin and, consequently, lead to collapse of the MLG.

DATES: Comments must be received by August 31, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-NM-51-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: James G. Rehr, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120S, FAA, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton,

Washington; telephone (425) 227-2783; 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.

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Availability of NPRMs

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Discussion

The FAA has received a report of corrosion on a fuse pin in the outboard support of the main landing gear (MLG) beam on a Boeing Model 767 series airplane. At the time the corrosion was detected, the airplane had accumulated 23,637 total flight hours and 5,652 total flight cycles. Investigation revealed that the chrome plating on the fuse pin did not have a sufficient bond to the base metal, which allowed the chrome plate to crack and peel from the base metal. This cracking in the chrome plate allowed moisture to accumulate in the subject area and, consequently, caused corrosion on the base metal of the fuse pin. Such cracking and corrosion, if not detected and corrected, could result in