

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. 98-NM-271-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 757 Series Airplanes Equipped with Rolls Royce Engines

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 757 series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive inspections to detect wire chafing of the left and right engine fuel shutoff valve wire bundles at Power Plant Station 278 on each engine strut, and repair if necessary. This proposal would also require repetitive replacement of three wire support brackets with improved wire support brackets. This proposal is prompted by reports that such wire support brackets failed due to fatigue, which subsequently caused the fuel shutoff valve wire to chafe and to experience a short circuit. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent such conditions, which could result in either the possible ignition of fuel vapors in a flammable leakage zone or in the inability to stop the flow of fuel in the event of an engine fire.

DATES: Comments must be received by September 17, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 8-NM-271-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: Stephen S. Oshiro, Aerospace Engineer, Systems and Equipment Branch, ANM-130S, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2793; 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 98-NM-271-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-271-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received reports indicating that one operator has experienced several incidents of "tripped" circuit breakers. These circuit breakers are part of the electrical circuit that controls the activation of the engine fuel shutoff valves. Later investigation revealed that the brackets that support the engine fuel shutoff valve wire bundle had failed due to fatigue. The bracket failures allowed a fuel shutoff wire bundle to chafe against the hole through which the wire bundle passes. The chafing of the wire bundle eventually resulted in exposure of an electrical conductor. This in turn led to a short circuit, after which the affected engine fuel valve shutoff circuit became disabled. The brackets are located at Power Plant Station 278, which is located in an area of the strut that is considered to be a "flammable leakage zone." This condition, if not corrected, could result in either the possible ignition of fuel vapors in a flammable leakage zone or in the inability to stop the flow of fuel in the event of an engine fire.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Service Bulletin 757-54-0013, Revision 3, dated October 23, 1997, which describes procedures for repetitive inspections of the wire support brackets to detect fatigue cracking, and corrective actions if necessary. The service bulletin also describes procedures for replacing the existing brackets with new, improved brackets. Such replacement would eliminate the need to continue performing the repetitive inspections specified above. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the 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 service bulletin described previously, except as discussed below.

Differences Between Proposed Rule and Service Bulletin

Operators should note that the service bulletin does not specify compliance times for accomplishing the initial and repeat inspections of the wire support brackets, nor does it specify a compliance time for replacing these brackets. The FAA has determined that a 12-month initial inspection compliance time and a repetitive inspection interval that is not to exceed 12 months would address the identified unsafe condition in a timely manner. In developing an appropriate compliance time for this AD, the FAA considered not only the manufacturer's recommendation, but the degree of urgency associated with addressing the subject unsafe condition, the average utilization of the affected fleet, and the time necessary to perform the modification.

In addition, Boeing has failed to establish the expected fatigue life of the new, improved wire support brackets to the FAA's satisfaction. The brackets installed per Revision 3 to the service bulletin are the latest of three designs, each of which was intended to correct the problem of bracket failure. However, both of the two previous bracket designs installed per earlier revisions to the service bulletin also proved to be susceptible to fatigue failure. Thus, because this design feature was historically prone to failure, this proposed AD would require that the wire support brackets installed in accordance with Revision 3 of the service bulletin be replaced at 12-month intervals—i.e., at the same time the wire bundles are inspected. This interval is shorter than the actual life of the previously failed brackets.

Operators also should note that this proposed AD would require operators to replace all three wire support brackets on each strut of all affected airplanes, whereas the service bulletin recommends that operators replace brackets on only certain airplanes. The proposed AD would require more replacements because the expected fatigue life of the bracket is not well established.

Finally, operators should note that, for the reason given above, this proposed AD would require inspections of the wire bundles that pass through the three wire support brackets on each strut to detect wire chafing, whereas the service bulletin recommends inspection only if a wire support bracket is cracked or broken.

Cost Impact

There are approximately 501 airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 249 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD.

It would take approximately 6 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed replacement and approximately 2 work hours to accomplish the proposed inspection. The average labor rate is estimated to be \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$525 per airplane per replacement cycle. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$250,245, or \$1,005 per airplane, per inspection/replacement 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.

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 98–NM–271–AD.

Applicability: Model 757 series airplanes equipped with Rolls Royce engines, 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 (d) 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 a short circuit that could result in either the possible ignition of fuel vapors in a flammable leakage zone or in the inability to stop the flow of fuel in the event of an engine fire, accomplish the following:

Corrective Action

(a) Within 12 months after the effective date of this AD, accomplish paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this AD. Thereafter, repeat paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) at intervals not to exceed 12 months.

(1) Accomplish a detailed visual inspection of the wire bundles that pass through the three wire support brackets located at Power Plant Station (PPS) 278 on each engine strut, to detect wire chafing.

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."

(2) Replace all three existing wire support brackets located at PPS 278 on each engine strut with improved wire support brackets, in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 757–54–0013, Revision 3, dated October 23, 1997.

(b) During any inspection performed in accordance with paragraph (a) of this AD, if

any wire bundle is found to be chafed, prior to further flight, repair the wire bundle in accordance with the Boeing Standard Wiring Practices Manual, Document D6-54446, Revision 23, dated August 1998.

Spares Paragraph

(c) As of the effective date of this AD, no person shall install a wire support bracket having P/N 287N1112-8, -9, -20, or -21 on any airplane.

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, 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.

Special Flight Permits

(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.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on July 27, 1999.

D. L. Riggin,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 99-19810 Filed 8-2-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-NM-270-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Aerospatiale Model ATR42 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 all Aerospatiale Model ATR42 series airplanes. This proposal would require a revision to the Airworthiness Limitations Section of the Instructions for Continued Airworthiness to incorporate inspections to detect fatigue cracking in certain structure, inspection intervals, and life limits for certain items. 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 ensure that fatigue cracking of certain structural elements is detected and corrected; such fatigue cracking could adversely affect the structural integrity of these airplanes.

DATES: Comments must be received by September 17, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-NM-270-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 Aerospatiale, 316 Route de Bayonne, 31060 Toulouse, Cedex 03, France. 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 97-NM-270-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-270-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, has notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on Aerospatiale Model ATR42 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that analysis of fatigue test data has revealed that certain inspections must be performed at specific intervals to preclude fatigue cracking in certain areas of the airplane. Additionally, the DGAC advises that certain life limits must be imposed for various components on these airplanes to preclude the onset of fatigue cracking in those components.

Fatigue cracking of certain structural elements, if not detected and corrected in a timely manner, could adversely affect the structural integrity of these airplanes.

Description of Service Information

Aerospatiale has issued ATR42 Maintenance Planning Document (MPD), "Time Limits," Revision 2, dated January 1997, which includes the following:

1. Life limit times for certain structural components or parts of the nose landing gear, the main landing gear, the main landing gear support structure, engine components, and various equipment.

2. Structural inspection times to detect fatigue cracking of certain Structural Significant Items (SSIs).

Performing the specified structural inspections will identify fatigue cracking, and revising the component life limits will preclude the onset of fatigue cracking of certain structural elements of the airplane.

The French DGAC has classified Revision 2 of the Time Limits section of the Aerospatiale Model ATR42 Maintenance Planning Document, dated January 1997, as mandatory, and issued French airworthiness directive 95-104-060 (B), dated May 24, 1995, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.